











# THE CHILDREN OF LUTETIA

B L A N C H A R D G A R R O L D

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"THE FRENCH IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH,"  
"MEMOIRS OF DISTINCTION," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:  
SAMPSON LOW, SON, AND MARSTON,  
LUDGATE HILL  
1864.

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**EDINBURGH : T. CONSTABLE,  
PRINTER TO THE QUEEN, AND TO THE UNIVERSITY.**

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## BOOK II.

### PARIS AS WORK AND AT PLAY,

#### CHAPTER I.

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THE working classes of France have always been courageous experimentalists in social politics. They have been the willing instruments of many dreamers, and have ranged themselves under all kinds of fanciful banners. Poor St. Simon, after a life of bitter struggling, left disciples who contrived to inflame the working population of France. The ripples of his life reached to the Revolution of 1848. Co-operation, fraternisation, associations of friends of labour, dreamlands of every hue, falling upon excitable Parisian minds, have possessed them. Families, communities, associations, and brotherhoods have been established in various parts of France; have flourished, and have failed. The family communities of Nivernois and Auvergne; the cheesemakers of the Jura; the societies inspired by Fourier's social theory, have fascinated the keen eye and fired the ardent temperament of the quick-witted children of

Lutetia. The facility with which they seize upon new ideas is equalled only by the ease with which they break away from the hobby of yesterday. Naturally speculative, and greatly flattered by the social philosophers to whom, by turns, they have lent their ears ; they set about the reconstruction of a throne or a workshop, and laugh and dance and smoke, while the revolution is in progress. In the pursuit of shadows they have neglected solid improvements. The communist has despised the savings bank : the dreamer, seeing nations sitting round a common hearth, with every man, woman, and child toasting a piece of bread of exactly the same size as that of his neighbour, has turned his back on the modest mutual benefit society. The right to labour — the claim to have a certain comfortable salary -- the State providing for the old, and educating the young workmen, in brigades -- the skilled in the ranks with the unskilled -- a temple of industry with the scavenger elbowing the sculptor at the high altar ; these were the visions that wandered about the galleries of the Luxembourg Palace some fifteen years ago, and tenanted the velvet seats of Louis Philippe's peers.

This proneness to turn impatient steps towards a workman's Utopia has made the work of the sober friends of the French labouring population, difficult and slow. The varieties of race of which the working population of Paris is composed, result in distinct groups of men and women, who retain the manners and language of their native province ; to which they will return when they have made savings

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enough. As the French soldier travels on, to and about, the church bells of his native village; so the Auvergnat who carries those swinging water-cans up the steep steps of Paris houses, waits the day when he will return to his beloved Auvergne, and, in the end, rest his bones within the shadow of the village church. Still others then take to distinct industries. There are savers, and there are spendthrift races. The pure Parisians are probably the least thrifty workmen in the capital. But all Paris workmen are conspicuous for an audacious air of independence, an obvious confidence in themselves, and a certain smothered feeling of opposition to the employer or patron. Although races take to distinct callings, as the Alsatians to the light business of waiters, and the Normans and Savoyards to the cab-box ; there is a good pervading sentiment among the working population, and a general politeness and cheerfulness in their intercourse, which must charm every stranger who goes among them. They are not severe moralists. The pure Parisian workman is not, I repeat, a saving creature ; but we shall find most estimable qualities in him ; and in the Auvergnats and other provincials, a stoical disregard of comfort and a steadiness of purpose, to the one end—a return home, with enough for old age in the old stocking.

The State offers to the workman who desires to save, the security of the funds. Waiters are said to be in the habit of buying Rentes ; but then a French rentier may have only a few francs invested in the funds of his country. The savings banks, which exist

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In nearly every town of France, were established by a royal ordinance in 1818, on bases laid down by a committee of which M. Laffitte, then governor of the bank, was the chairman. These banks are well administered, much on the same plan as ours, except that the days for the reception of deposits are generally Sundays, for the convenience of the workmen. No depositor's savings can exceed £40. Should the depositor not reduce the excess, the authorities buy into the funds for him. Again, mutual benefit societies can deposit their capital in a savings bank to the extent of £320. The savings bank law of 1818 was slightly modified in 1851 and 1853. The working population have also a *caisse* at their disposal, where they may buy, on equitable terms, an annuity for their old age. The *caisse* is beginning to be largely patronized.

I have already glanced at what the State does for the poor, and how the State offers workmen the opportunity of helping themselves. The French working man has not only savings banks at his back— he is not only protected from the last stage of misery by the paternal operations of the Assistance Publique — but he has his mutual benefit society also.

Mutual benefit societies have been long established in France. There are 45 older than the present century. The superior Government authorities made an inquiry, in 1853, into the number and condition of French mutual benefit societies. There were then 2438 societies in existence. At the end of 1858 the number had increased to 3860

societies, with 147 branches, and 300,000  
ordinary members. The total income of the so-  
cieties was then £320,000. They are a little over-  
governed—the dark centralizing spirit has seized  
them—yet they prosper, and will, I trust, continue  
to prosper, since, if I may judge by the life of the  
working man's independence. They are safe  
from the ~~republican~~ ~~revolutionary~~ course to which he  
is led when he is ill. He is not humiliated; and, as M.  
Jules Simon justly asserts, the pride of independent  
labour is not bad pride. This pride elevates the  
character, while it promotes the happiness, of the  
working man. When he has become a member of  
a mutual benefit society, he finds that he has asso-  
ciated himself with a number of prudent men of  
his own class; that they have taken up the go-  
vernment of their own destinies; that they are  
raising their children to hold honourable places in  
the world. By degrees, their eyes are opened to  
the power labour can achieve with thrift; to how  
property will grow, even out of the day-labourer's  
pittance. From this knowledge, born of their own  
virtue, they learn that capital is not such a monster  
after all; and that there may be liberal sentiments  
even in the breast of a patron. But to see this  
they must be left free. They will be glad to re-  
ceive good counsel, and honest assistance, such as the  
Grand Council of Benefit Societies at Marseilles  
gives to the 147 societies it governs. But Govern-  
ment must not be *brusque* with them. To certify  
rates of mortality is a duty on the part of the  
Government, in order to protect the man who is

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insuring his life against fallacious promises. The career of hundreds of English mutual benefit societies and burial clubs is a warning that will not be lost. In order to protect the ignorant against the roguery of the designing, a Tidd Pratt is wanted,—scarcely a commission for the encouragement and surveillance of mutual benefit societies like that issued by the French Government in 1852. M. Simon hopes that the commissioners will know how to restrain themselves, and to limit their interference—a hope that all the well-wishers of the French working-classes must echo; since the least attempt to curb the fair independence of a body of working men who meet together, in their own way, in order to provide for their families in sickness and death, must end in the destruction of that body. Already many useful working men's associations have been governed to death—witness the history of *L'Humanité* at Lille, for an example. For the benefit of the working men of England I must here notice, while touching upon French mutual benefit societies, a custom among some of them which does them infinite honour.

In the lives of many working men—even the most sober and the most provident—there are moments of supreme difficulty. A fire carries away the household gods; the wife and children fall ill; an accident happens to the bread-winner, and the brave and cunning arm is paralysed. Sickness destroys his wages, and doubles his expenses. The allowance is insufficient. There is the usurious pawnbroker; and in the workman's home there is

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nothing he can spend so soon to the pawn-shop, the absence of which will only be felt by him after his. He has no luxuries and what he can pay. Where is he to find help? His position is very critical. He may get out of the want of a few pounds, never to rise again. "The poor" breaks up the houses of honest workers even in America. He is in a position from which it no foresight nor exertion could have screened him. It fares wofully in England with men so placed. How may it fare in Paris?

Some of the mutual benefit societies have distinguished themselves by establishing a system known as—the Loan of Honour. The working man who has always lived honourably, whose neighbours esteem him highly, who has saved to the full extent of his powers; when overweighted by undeserved misfortune, may go before the council of his benefit society, and claim the Loan of Honour. His companions lend their savings to him, and for security ask only the promise of an honourable man, that he will return the loan; and the money of the poor, so lent to the poor, is safe—both capital and interest. There is something touching in this fraternal action of working men. A workman has, by his good life, created so much regard, respect, and love among the companions of his labour; they are so certain of his word that, although he has not a shilling to-day, and he cannot earn one, they will lend him of their savings, on terms that bind only his honour. Honoured indeed are borrower and lender. These loans of honour are not accorded only to the worthy unfortunate; loans of

honour are given, also to workmen of high character who have a chance of bettering themselves, and who are in want of money.

Women figure in very small numbers, in French mutual benefit societies. The men have a prejudice against female members, declaring that a man is not so often ill as a woman ; although the statistics of the Government Commission showed, in 1857-8, that the percentage of illness was lower with the female members, than with the male. In order to take care of themselves, some of the French work-women have established societies of their own, which have prospered, and which now include about 12,000 members.

I have now glanced at all the operations, public and private, by which the French working classes are helped, or by which they can help themselves. The hospitals for the poor sick ; the asylums for homeless children and the aged ; the out-door relief ; the arrondissement poor-house ; the private œuvres ; the savings banks, mutual benefit and annuity societies. In aid of these systematic operations there are, as the reader has learned, gratuitous, or half-gratuitous, restaurants and alimentary societies, where food is sold at, or under, cost price.

I must now entreat the reader's attention to the laws which affect the working classes of France. These are in many respects unlike English laws, and unlike any laws English workmen would receive with favour. The English workman is not accustomed to feel the application of special laws to him-

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self; whereas the French workman, in his activity, finds himself the object of special documents, by which he must be bound, and he is consequently given some account of his rights and his duties.

M. Audiganne, chief of a department of Commerce, to whose studies the population of France I have always been visiting a factory, in the department of Seine, a few years ago, when he met there an admirable workman who had died there one Nogaret. It appeared that this intelligent man had mastered all the laws affecting his class, and that he had become, by the force of his character and the exactness of his knowledge, the supreme judge in disputes—in himself a Court of Prud'hommes. It was his custom to assemble his fellow-workmen under some shady chestnuts in the factory yard, after work hours, and to deliver short lectures to them on their rights, their duties, and their industries—to the end that every workman should be his own lawyer. Nogaret died at his post. Struck by the utility of his little lectures, M. Audiganne designed a short work on workmen's laws, which was crowned by the French Academy.

Let me now describe the laws which especially affect the working classes of France.

No child can be put to work in a factory before he is eight years old. From eight to twelve years of age, he may work eight hours; and from twelve to sixteen, he may work twelve hours—and no more. No child under thirteen years of age is permitted to work

under any pretext whatever, between the hours of nine P.M. and five A.M. The law discountenances night-work--making eight hours of work by night, equivalent to twelve hours' work by day. Children may not be put to work on Sundays nor on recognised holidays. Parents must prove that their children, who are under twelve years of age, go to school; after twelve this responsibility ceases, provided parents can show that their children have completed their "primary" education. Then the child comes in contact with the municipal authorities. He opens the story of his life of industry by having his name, age, etc., inscribed in a book, or *livret*, by the municipal authorities; and he enters the factory or workshop. His master enters the date of his arrival in the book, which it is the workman's interest to keep in the strictest order throughout his career. When a boy is to be apprenticed, his parents address themselves to the secretary of the *Prud'hommes*, or to the clerk of the *Juge de Paix*, or to a notary; the fee receivable by either of these functionaries being two francs. There is a registry fee of one franc; so that for half-a-crown a legal act of apprenticeship is completed. The regulations which protect the apprentice, are excellent. His master must watch his morals and act like a good father of a family towards him. The hours of his labour are limited according to his age, and its severity, according to his strength. The *Prud'hommes* protect him always. He has two months' novitiate after his act of apprenticeship has been signed, during which time he is at liberty to annul the contract he has made, if

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his place should not prove agreeable to him his apprenticeship is over, the apprentice receives a certificate from his master, in which is stated that the bearer has satisfactorily and completely passed his time, and has won his new condition as journeymen. This certificate is necessary, in order to obtain the book, or *livret*, with which every French workman must be provided.

This book, or *livret*, although M. Audiganne pleads strongly for it, is highly unpopular among the working classes. It is used in two ways, viz., as stamping the character by describing the antecedents of the bearer; and as an instrument in the hands of the police. By it an employer who is about to engage a workman, can see whether he left his last place in debt; the *livret* is, in short, the story of the bearer's laborious life. It proves him provident or improvident. By it an employer can tell whether a workman has always punctually repaid advances made to him by former employers; that is, advances made within the limits allowed by the law. So far, it serves a purpose that is useful to both employer and employed; but it has an objectionable power in the sight of the bearer, since it places him directly within the reach and surveillance of the police. M. Audiganne may plead his hardest for the *livret*, considered as an instrument of police; yet he will never be able to persuade workmen that they should be glad to see policemen interested in their daily life. He ranges himself familiarly by the workman's side, presses his blouse affectionately, and says to him, "Come, come, we need not be profound politicians

in order to understand that society cannot be maintained and developed without order; that public security requires special measures; in short, that policemen are necessary in a civilized state. The police protect the weak against the strong, so that we should look with reverence rather than with disdain at the policeman."

After all, M. Audiganne, seeing the workman's stolid opposition to his broad view of things, gives in, and is constrained to admit that perhaps it would have been well to leave the workman's *livret* in his hands, as it was placed in them in the year 1803. He thinks that the law of 1854, which modified the obligations of the workman's *livret*, tended to weaken it as a police instrument; but enough sting remains in it to wound any susceptible man. It gives the policeman a direct and special control over the man who carries it; and it is for this reason it is unpopular among the working classes of France. Honest as well as dishonest men chafe under surveillance. All work-folk—men, women, and children—are bound by the law to carry a *livret*, with the exception of workmen in the royal arsenals. Children who are working for their parents are not exempt; but, with admirable good sense, it has been decreed that all certified members of mutual benefit societies shall be exempted from the obligation of carrying a *livret*—the diploma of member being in itself a *livret*. This concession absolves the provident workman from the duty of going to the police office to obtain the *livret*, which the police will make a note of on their register, classing him alphabetically, so that he may be

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traced from point to point, should the ~~age~~/<sup>author</sup>ity have need of him, at some future ~~time~~. This famous *livret* is a little book, on the first page of which the laws affecting the working classes, printed. Then follow the names, age, birthplace, etc., of the bearer; his last employer, etc. By law it must not cost the workman more than 2½d. Should he lose it, he can replace it by making a declaration of his condition, etc.: false declarations being punished by imprisonment.

For the workman who labours at home, the *livret* must be a most vexatious institution; since, by law, he must make every man who gives him work inscribe his name in it, and the date on which the work was delivered. Again, when a workman travels, say from the provinces to Paris, he must repair to the Prefecture of Police to register his arrival there. Once registered on the books of the police, he is at liberty to seek work; but every time he changes his employer he must go to the commissary of police of his neighbourhood to "legalise" the signature of his late employer in his *livret*. Indeed, he must be prepared, at any moment, to show his "papers" to the police. Before he can move from one town to another, these papers must be in order, and *viséed* by the police. The reader will not be at a loss, then, to understand how it is that the *livret* wounds the susceptibilities of a workman. It keeps him effectually under the eyes of the authorities. It restricts his movements. It imposes continual and teasing formalities upon him. It places him in a position that must hurt his self-respect—since it does not leave

him on an equality with his fellow-citizens who are not workmen. He cannot escape this *livret* and its provisions, without incurring fine and imprisonment. He is always to be found, and always kept on his good behaviour by the *livret* that binds him to his patron, through the police office. These stringent regulations, however, are less severe, it should be observed, than they were formerly. Imperial legislation has always moderated the rigours of the law towards workmen. For instance, the old law, by which an employer could inscribe the debt due to him by a workman who was leaving his employ, and compel his next employer to deduct one-fifth of the man's wages for the liquidation of the debt, has been modified to the workman's advantage. Now an employer cannot register a workman's debt to him on his *livret* for more than 30 francs, nor can he exact in payment, more than one-tenth of the workman's earnings. This limitation of the amount which an employer can inscribe, is a most valuable reform. In the old time the indebted workman might fall into debt hopelessly. His employer became his master, and he was demoralized to the level of a slave.

While I am on the subject of debts between employers and employed, I must draw the reader's attention to an institution to which the working classes, not only of Paris, but of all the great industrial centres of France, attach much importance, since it is a representative institution in which their class is fully represented. The inquirer will find traces of this institution ever and anon on his path, so that a full understanding of its constitution and scope at

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the outset will enable him to appreciate, with fairness, its popularity and its influence.

I am certain that not one Englishman finds his way to the modest little court behind the Chateau d'Eau once in ten years. John Bull pants along the steaming Boulevards, past the modest court, keeping his sight-seeing eye full upon the column of July. Many a great employer of labour, many a sapient legislator, many a skilful writer has passed this narrow turning by the high white barracks, or sniffed at the flowers in the pretty market about the fountain; who had done well to take a three minutes' stride to the little Conciliation Court of Labour and Capital hard by. I blame neither the great employer, nor senator, nor writer. How should they know about this little Court of Prud'hommes? Only a few years ago, being much interested in the French working men's conciliation courts, and knowing that they originated at Marseilles<sup>1</sup> as courts for the settlement of disputes among the master fishermen and their men; I asked a Frenchman who was born and bred at Boulogne, and who had not spent many months of his life away from the sandy banks of the Liane, where the Boulogne Prud'hommes held their court. He did me the honour of staring at me from head to foot. "Are you serious?" said he. I replied that I was in downright earnest, and that I had repaired to Boulogne for the purpose of seeing the judicial fishermen of the port. Whereat my friend was good enough to laugh immoderately. I had been running my head against some old

<sup>1</sup> Established by King René in 1452.

history. " You are speaking of the middle ages, my good fellow. Prud'hommes here—and in these days! But you cannot be serious." I was not to be put down. My friend shrugged his shoulders when I set out to find the Prud'hommes of his native town. I found that they had regularly existed under his sagacious nose, and under that of his father before him. If then the Prud'hommes of a little provincial town fulfil their honourable office, unnoticed and unknown, the stranger in Paris must be excused if he comes and goes, year after year, and takes no note of the four conciliation courts of Paris; where disputes between employer and employed are arranged by a bench of judges composed half of employers and half of employed, with an independent president, nominated by the State. I will refer the reader, who may be anxious to master all the operations of these conciliation courts, and to acquaint himself with the articles of their constitution, to the pages of M. Pradier-Fodéré<sup>1</sup> and M. Mollot.<sup>2</sup> I have watched the effect of these courts; the masters and men ranged on the bench, wearing a black ribbon and a star, for badge of office—listening to complainant and defendant without the intervention of attorney or barrister, and for a few pence settling a dispute about wages, or an apprentice, or the price of work, or wrongful dismissal, or trade-marks. A dispute is first carried before a private court: and here the

<sup>1</sup> *Précis de Droit Commercial.* Par M. Pradier-Fodéré, Avocat à la Cour Impériale de Paris.

<sup>2</sup> *Code de L'Ouvrier.* Par M. Mollot, Juge au Tribunal de la Seine.

majority are disposed of. But, should the private court fail in their attempt to reconcile the disputants, the case goes before the general, or public court. From this court there is an ultimate appeal to the Tribunal of Commerce ; but the appeals are very rare. A few shillings are all the most litigious can expend in search of justice. The working man who comes before this tribunal comes before judges whom he has himself elected. He is certain that his case will be thoroughly understood, since his judges, both masters and men, are in his own trade. There are four courts of Prud'hommes in Paris—viz., one for all metallic industries, one for textile industries, one for chemical industries, and one for miscellaneous industries. I saw how, in each case, a judge whose experience enabled him fully to understand it, set forth the laws and customs of his trade, giving his opinion as to a fair price, or as to good conduct. Some of the defendants were women claiming more wages than they had received, or complaining of the treatment of their apprenticed children. The coolness and clearness with which these ladies set forth their grievances were remarkable. Now and then a grave Prud'homme would reprove their volubility ; but, as a rule, they were more than equal to their male antagonists. Their aplomb and wealth of diction suggested to me spectres of French Madame Caudles, armed with cutting logic, and prepared with charges of small shot, in the shape of sarcasms, enough to make many a Benedict quail. I think it was the Hon. Mrs. Norton who said our English women

had no rights--they had only wrongs. Now to those among my countrywomen who feel that they are poor, lone, down-trodden creatures; and who may wish to learn the noble art of self-defence with the tongue, I would recommend a few mornings in the court of the Prud'hommes, behind the Chateau d'Eau.

In the constitution of this court every possible provision has been made to insure the equality of labour and capital. A meeting of masters elects their representative judges; while a meeting of overseers and journeymen elects the workmen-judges. The master-judges serve gratuitously; whereas the workmen-judges may receive a fee for each attendance. It is an honour to a work man to be elected a judge among his fellows, and he covets the distinction, and regulates his life to win it. The reader will have some idea of the importance of these courts of conciliation when I tell him that they dispose of about 50,000 disputes annually, and that about fifty appeals are annually made from their decisions to the tribunals of commerce. The cost to the contending parties of the Prud'hommes' decisions does not exceed tenpence! Let no legal big-wig, I pray, sneer at tenpenny justice. It is not cheap and nasty. It is justice without ermine, granted; but it is justice with a kind eye, a gentle word, and a loving hand. It is the justice of brothers speaking, in a private room, to angry brothers; not the justice of the county court at the instigation of a covetous attorney. In England, when the poor man appeals to Justice, her

first act is not to lift her arm to protect, but to open her hand to receive. The Prud'homme protects gratuitously, and will have no pettifogging between himself and the complainant who seeks him. The law against coalitions of workmen to raise wages, or of masters to lower them, is very severe here. There are no monster meetings, where demagogues may declaim while the passions of men are roused by a real or imaginary grievance. The Potters are unknown near Nôtre Dame. The cord is much tighter drawn than it need be, doubtless. These masses of workmen might with safety to the State, breathe a freer air. Their illusions are over. If machinery have ground some of the poetry out of them, and made them less apt to put the well-being of their family in peril, by dancing and careering to the vibrations of a revolutionary refrain ; it has also planted their feet more firmly upon the earth, and tuned their minds to sober airs ; so that they deserve less looking after by the police, and the liberty to mass themselves in quiet, to touch upon subjects of common interest.

But while this freedom is not theirs, they have for consolation an institution in which their interests are fairly represented. They are not permitted to strike for shortening the hours of labour (limited by law, with few exceptions, to 12 in every 24), nor for higher wages. The punishment for such coalitions is imprisonment. But they have their Prud'hommes, to whom they can carry their complaints. These are arbitrators against whom they cannot raise the finger of suspicion. The

Prud'hommes have the authority to decide who is in the wrong, and their decisions have prevented much mischief that has threatened of late years. The secretary to the Paris Prud'hommes told me that there would have been many unhappy conflicts among the builders of Paris and their operatives, had there been no courts of Prud'hommes to settle disputes. With 100,000 working builders engaged in boulevardizing Paris, the value of an ever-ready and gratuitous court of appeal is undeniable. Take the case of a bricklayer who has a complaint to make against his employer. He repairs direct to the secretary of the Prud'hommes' office. He requests this official to invite his master to attend a private audience of the Prud'hommes, on a certain day. Should the master fail, he is summoned by the officer of the court, and put to the expense of one franc. The master must attend in person. The Prud'hommes assembled, hear the man's complaint against his employer. This must be made in moderate and becoming language. Both sides are bound to respect the presence of their judges. Contempt of court may be punished with three days' imprisonment. The judges endeavour (having themselves experience, both as employers and employed, in the building trade) to reconcile the bricklayer with his master. Should they fail (and, as a rule, they succeed), the case is carried into the public general court, and the party proved to be in the wrong pays the costs. If the sum in dispute is less than £8, the judgment of the general court is final; when it exceeds this sum the defendant has

an appeal to the Tribunal of Commerce. Say that the bricklayer's master takes no notice of the Prud'hommes' summons; the consequence is that his case is decided in his absence. He may, however, appeal against the judgment of the court at any time within three days of its delivery. The court being one of conciliation, will suspend judgment when either party is ill\* or unavoidably absent. Again, complainant or defendant may object to any of the Prud'hommes on the bench, on the ground that he is interested in the decision, or that one of the parties concerned is nearly related to him. These are precautions which have been very wisely taken by the framers of the law under which the Prud'hommes exist.

M. Audiganne sums up the benefits of the Courts of Prud'hommes, saying that they offer to litigants "a simple process for obtaining justice; that their decisions are prompt, and that their charges are extremely moderate." One word more as to charges. By the law of the 7th August 1850, the stamps for summonses, etc., issued by workmen against masters, are debited to the cause, and are payable only after the case is decided. If the workman is condemned as in the wrong, he is exempt from the payment of the stamp dues. The object of this exemption is obvious. The law will not have him put at a disadvantage by reason of his poverty.

I think I have now fully set before the reader all that is necessary for him to know in order to understand the special relations which exist between the working classes, and the poor of Paris and the State

or municipal authorities. He has seen that the Government is not, at any rate, a *laissez-aller* Government, but has rather a penetrating nose, and fingers prone to find their way into the most insignificant of pies. The system by which the poor are cared for is ingenious, and is not costly. The mutual benefit societies are under central authority, and are helped by the State. In every charity and asylum the State finger appears—to help generally, but always to control. Frenchmen have become used to the endless forms, the mounds of papers, the incessant signatures, and perpetual visas; to the omnipresent *papier timbre* with the weighty thumb of a functionary indicating where it is to be signed. A Frenchman's life is a long journey through a *contrôle*. He learns to lean on it, as, according to M. Simon, the working classes have been taught to depend for their living, not wholly upon the industry of their heads and hands, but, in part, upon the tax on the theatres and the properties of the hospitals and asylums, and State subventions. And he is morally deformed by this dependence, as a man's body becomes deformed by the use of a crutch.

## CHAPTER XI.

Marshal Soult's Bootmaker—The Shameless Poor—The Working Men's Commission—The Cost of Cheapness—The Working Shoemakers—English and French Working Shoemakers compared—The Working Saddlers—The Glove-makers and Female Labour—The Paris Working Tailors and Slop-workers—The Dead Season—M. Ternaux, Magistrate and Slop-seller—M. Lemann's Memorial—The Invalids of the Craft.

A VERY sober, industrious, and clever workman enjoyed a good reputation with his patron under the rule of the Citizen King. He was a working shoemaker, on whose skill his master could depend. It was to him that, during some years, the manufacture of the boots of Marshal Soult was confided. The marshal could wear only a certain description of loose and easy boots—his feet being swollen and tender. One workman hit the marshal's taste in shoe-leather to a nicety, and was therefore a hand to be well paid and courted. This working shoemaker was concierge in a modest little house, and he lived in his little lodge with his wife and children, rent free. With the help of his wife he could earn from six to eight francs per diem, easily. He was, as I have already remarked, a sober and industrious man. He lived well. He had a good dinner every day—as my informant, who lived in the same house, could testify, from frequent observation. He sipped his

coffee and brandy regularly after dinner—a luxury that stamped his prosperity. He was a methodical man, moreover, in his pleasures as in his business. His little room was a model of order—with its rows of pigeon holes, in which the various parts of boots and shoes were arranged. He could, with a well-regulated moderation and consummate skill, withdraw from the materials his master left with him to make up, certain bits of leather, which he turned to his own profit. Monday was his pleasure day; but, unlike his compeers, he did his Monday rationally and economically. This excellent father of a family would not squander half the fruit of his labour in a debauch. No; regularly as Monday afternoon came, the most estimable manufacturer of Marshal Soult's gouty boots put four francs into his waistcoat pocket, and sallied forth to drink his mug of wine with his friends—and two or three mugs, if he should feel inclined—but to return with something of the four francs still in his pocket; and with steady legs, as became the father of a family.\* In short, any observer found wandering through Paris in search of an example of a flourishing, orderly, and skilful Paris workman, might have been referred to Marshal Soult's shoemaker; and the only exception the said observer could have made to him was, that the example was above the average of working shoemakers—living as our man did rent free, and having by a turn of fortune, hit upon the manner of making an old soldier's boots easy wear. This shoemaker and porter, with the help of his wife (who could earn something like three francs per diem), was undoubtedly putting

money in his purse, and providing a stout umbrella of bank-notes for a rainy day.

The reader may have been led to wonder by this time why I intrude the history of this fortunate cobbler. Certainly he was not of the "poor of Paris."

I have said that there are classes of workmen here, as among our London and Liverpool and Glasgow workmen, who have learned to receive alms without a qualm ; and who have transmitted to their children the habit of depending upon charity for at least a part of their livelihood. What if I tell the reader, as I may on the most reliable evidence, that Soult's shoemaker as regularly received his dole from the charitable institutions, upon the lists of which he had continued to make good his claim ; as he sipped his after-dinner coffee and his nip of brandy. He and his were firmly grafted on certain *œuvres*, and he was not ashamed to take the crust from the mouth of the hungry. He regarded the alms he obtained as part of his income. Being a thrifty man, it is not improbable that what he received in charity he put out at good interest. As M. Simon asserts, charity unwisely administered has become a source of income to thousands of the working classes of France ; but few are, I would fain hope, as unblushing in the reception thereof as Marshal Soult's shoemaker : one of the shameless poor.

Few, indeed, if we are to accept the latest declaration, or manifesto, of the Paris shoemakers, have the opportunity of pocketing public "assistance" in the morning, and eating a good bourgeois dinner, with brandy and coffee to follow, in the evening.

It happened most fortunately that the Working Men's Commission, which was appointed in the spring of 1862 to report on the industrial worth of the various departments of our Great Exhibition of 1862, was still sitting, or meeting occasionally, in the Rue Dauphine, under the presidency of M. Chabaud, when I was among the workmen of Paris. The delegates whom this commission appointed were representatives of nearly every variety of Paris industry. These intelligent working men were to be seen in Captain Fowke's palace, examining all the varieties of the industry which they represented. It was their duty not only to report on the relative excellencies of French and foreign workmanship, but also to see how English workmen were paid, and how they lived. A group of Paris shoemakers examined the British, German, and other boots and shoes in the Exhibition; visited British shoemakers in their workshops, and drew up tables of their wages. Followed groups of tailors, hatmakers, saddlers, cabinet-makers, glove-makers, engineers, coach-builders, printers and lithographers, designers for manufactures, metal-workers, paper-stainers, etc. The president of the commission under whom these groups of delegates, elected by the universal suffrage of their fellow-workmen, started for London; and returned to make a comparative study of native and foreign workmanship and wages, freely placed the valuable labours of the delegates before me. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of these working men's reports on their own condition, and on the condition of British workmen. We have here

the very latest information on the systems under which Paris workmen labour, the wages they receive, and the condition in which these wages enable them to live. By the help of these reliable and recent revelations I shall be enabled to set before the reader some glimpses of the actual condition of the Paris working population, and of the causes which tend to increase the burdens of the Assistance Publique.

We shall find these working men casting about for a system that shall revivify their industry to their own special advantage, at war with political economy. They will have nought to do with supply and demand. They fall foul of competition that has no bowels, and, without a shudder over the iniquity, clap a superfine Saxony coat upon the back of the dapper clerk, at a little more than the price of the cloth ; all the cheapness being got out of the unscrupulous reduction of the workman's wage. Cheapness so produced, and when it is plainly explained by the men who are its victims, must afflict the most rigid political economist. It is true that these working men, whose cries of misery strike upon our ear, have not the culture necessary to grapple with their opponents. They are not would-be reformers of the world, panting to reconstruct society. They just see the immediate cause of their own distresses, and they suggest the remedies that occur to them. They are content to apply what philosophy they may have, to the advantage of their own corporation or fraternity. The shoemaker sticks grimly to his last, leaving the working tailor (who is grinding his

teeth before the grand establishment of the slopseller) to take up his own goose and belabour the oppressor. Hence a rude hand-to-mouth philosophy, that has an eloquence in it which is all its own. This philosophy may be ragged and flimsy; but since it is earnestly held—since in it the stomach speaks with the head—it is not to be lightly passed, but rather to be closely pondered. In this wise the workmen of Paris think to-day; and make request to the powers that be, to relieve them from the restraints and injustices that degrade and enrage them.

The working shoemakers of Paris are an important body of men; they are also a most intelligent body. In their report on English shoemakers' work, they show that they are above national prejudices; since they freely own that much of the British shoemakers' work they saw, was superior to theirs. They also contrast the condition of the English shoemaker with theirs. Cheapness is their bugbear. They allow that it is easy for a theoretical economist, by statistics, and eloquence in the marshalling of them, to demonstrate glorious results from unlimited competition and freedom. But results often confound the speculator; and they fear that competition and cheapness will destroy their trade. They applaud heartily all theories that are to produce cheap bread, cheap meat, cheap lodgings—in short, cheap life for the workman; but necessities remain dear, and wages fall! They allow that they are not competent to deal with great social problems; but, they repeat, here is a fact—necessities remain dear, and wages fall! There are cheap clothes; but, be it observed,

the workman is not, for obvious reasons, a great consumer of clothing. A cheap *redingote* is not a necessity to him. He objects to see the clerk promoted to glossy redingotes at his expense. He urges his fellow-workmen not to buy cheap boots—which are cheap because the work and material are bad, and the maker thereof has been robbed of half his rightful wage for labour. These cheap boots and shoes are appearing everywhere, and good shoemakers are disappearing. They are ill paid in Paris. Their wages are from 25 to 35 per cent. less than the wages of English shoemakers. Indeed, according to the Paris shoemakers, our workmen have the advantage of them in all respects. The English working shoemaker is better lodged. The French shoemaker is packed with his family in a garret under the tiles, exposed to all weathers, and he pays a heavy rent for this wretched accommodation. The Englishman eats meat, good and solid, while the Parisian munches herbs and vegetables. The Paris shoemakers assert all this after a visit to their London rivals. They declare, above all, that they envy English workmen their liberal institutions, their right of meeting, of discussing wages and arranging tariffs; and the facilities which are afforded them for the formation of mutual benefit associations. They see the various trades of English workmen banded in unions that can hold their own against the unfair encroachments of employers; while they are held apart, and denied, by law, the right of discussing their grievances. The Paris shoemakers attribute their present unhappy condition not only

to the forced isolation which makes them powerless against their employers, but also to the high price of lodgings and food. They are overworked and under-paid. In the summer they work from daybreak to sunset, and in winter it is their rule to work until midnight. The greater number of these hard workers earn only from 2s. to 2s. 6d. by this protracted day's labour; or about 2d. per hour. The representative working shoemakers who make this statement, insist on its exact truth; and refer the incredulous to the books of the shopkeepers, where, according to them, "the martyrology" of the workman is written. These books will show where the working shoemakers live who work sixteen hours a day, to earn 12s. a week. To check this evil and tempt French youth to follow the shoemaker's handicraft, and so to rear a new generation of good workmen, like the Paris workmen of old; the followers of St. Crispin require freedom to defend themselves against the permanent coalitions of capitalists and grinding manufacturers. They wish to establish a tariff of wages by the vote of a committee composed half of employers and half of employed, elected by universal suffrage—this committee to be a tribunal between master and workman, and to watch all the interests of shoemakers, as workmen's interests are guarded in English trades unions. They call attention, in conclusion, to their long hours of ill-paid labour, which leave them no time for self-improvement. They live and work apart, at the mercy of cheap shoe-vendors, who, when the trade is slack, profit by their indigence to reduce their wages almost to starvation point.

The clearness and calmness with which all these grievances and remedies are described and debated by the representative shoemakers of Paris, deserve notice. In their demands there are no "illusions." The men have studied the condition of London shoemakers, and have, they believe, hit upon the reason which leaves the Paris workman wholly at the mercy of his master, and therefore, liable to be the victim, when the race is for cheapness. Again and again, the Paris workman exclaims, it is not the raw material which is obtained at a lower price to-day than it fetched yesterday. The bourgeois wears a cheap coat and cheap boots to-day, because yesterday the poor workmen's wage was ruthlessly diminished. To-day there is less food upon the tailor's table, and less fire in his stove ; but the bourgeois goes on his way rejoicing, and cries to his friend, " Now, you would never guess what I paid for this redingote, nor the price I gave for these boots ! Why, 30 per cent. less than I have been in the habit of giving."

" Bah ! " exclaims the friend. The friend imitates the bourgeois' example ; while the workman, with mournful eyes, looks on, for the 30 per cent. has been taken out of his pocket.

The shoemakers are not alone in their complaints of diminished wages, and absolute subjection to the tyranny of masters. The working saddlers sing the same mournful ditty. They pray for a committee of masters and workmen, to regulate wages, hours of work, etc. They are underpaid and overworked ; and, with food and lodging at their present price,

have a hard time. They are compelled to live a long way from their work, and they have to bear up against the slack season, with wages always from 25 to 30 per cent. lower than those of London working saddlers—who work only ten hours per diem. This unsatisfactory state of things is traced to the greed of middlemen, and the mania for cheapness. The working saddlers conclude by making three demands —viz., the reduction of a day's work to ten hours; an equitable tariff of prices for piece-work; and the guarantee of this tariff by the Prud'hommes.

The workmen engaged in the manufacture of gloves follow, with their complaints of a failing trade and diminished salaries, caused, according to them, by the subdivision of labour, and the introduction of women into the manufactory. They have most decided ideas on the employment of women. They reply to "the philanthropists of the glove trade" who justify female labour; by the assertion that it is right to give women the means of earning their living; by saying that the working classes of Paris are anxious to see woman employed at fair wages; but they object to see her introduced into factories as a cheaper machine than a male worker. They find female labour brought to bear, only to reduce the wages of men; and the glovemakers are suffering from the introduction of this cheap human machinery. They complain that since 1854 their industry has been on the decline; and they ask to be equal with their employers before the law. As the law stands, employers can impose any prices; and the workmen are not per-

mitted to meet and resist a manifest injustice. This is the note on which, as I shall show, all classes of the working population of Paris dwell unweariedly. The glovemakers put the history of their decline in all the eloquence of clear figures. Let the reader judge.

In 1832, a workman cut three dozen gloves per diem, at 1s. 2½d. the dozen, and so earned 3s. 7½d. for his day's work. In 1836, both price and labour were increased; the workman received 1s. 5d. per dozen, but he could cut only two dozen and a half per diem, so that he gained 1½d. less than in 1832. In 1840, the price was raised to 1s. 8d. per dozen; but the work was again more than proportionally increased, since the workman could cut only two dozen per diem. His wage was then 3s. 4d. And now a good workman can earn only 2s. 11d. per diem! The decrease has been slow, but incessant; while food and lodging have vastly increased, and while all kinds of speculators and middlemen have made fortunes by grinding these isolated and defenceless workmen. No wonder then that the old artistic glovemakers of Paris are disappearing, and that apprentices to the trade are decreasing. The wage is not sufficient to pay the old cultivated skill that made the glovemakers of Paris famous.

I now turn to the Paris tailors—a most intelligent and important class of the working population of Paris, numbering between 20,000 and 30,000. They, also, sent their delegates to London in 1862; and these have returned to Paris with an account of the superior wages, lodgings, and food of the London

tailors. The tailors of Paris appear to be in a state of discontent ; and the report of their delegates will not tend to allay this *discontent*. Their experience in London was not, however, extended enough to give them an idea of the wages of the average working tailor. These Paris delegates dwell on the fine airy workshops of Stoltz and Poole ; ay, but they missed the garrets of the slop-workers of east London. If, throughout their contrast, they have made this same omission, contrasting the wages of a London West-end working tailor with the gains of a Paris slop-worker, they will greatly deceive their brethren. The slaves of the needle in London may vie in misery with the slaves of Paris. The gigantic slop-shops of London have as many living skeletons behind them as any Paris can boast. There are hot and noisome workshops in London ; and as many, I dare assert, as may be found in Paris ; where slop-work is done ; where men sell cheap, not cloth, but men's work, pushing the workman into the background, that his hungry eyes may not accuse the bowelless tradesman and the thoughtless customer who are making an unholy bargain. Wherever cheapness is the result of wages reduced to starvation price, there must be squalid homes, and angry passions, and disordered lives. The representative Paris tailors commend the system of the best London houses, where the workman can earn his six shillings per diem. I believe that such a workman lives more comfortably in London than a French workman could live in Paris, on the same wages. The English workman does not work so long as his

Parisian brethren ; he is more independent, for he is free to speak his wrongs in the company of his fellow-workmen.

I understand thoroughly the temper in which the delegates of a thoughtful body of men like the tailors of Paris, approached the subject of slop-work. They could not but perceive that the cheapness represented so much bread filched from the mouths of their children. The slop-seller must give a certain market price for the material, but human labour must be fed; and will not lie by like a steam-engine until there is work to do. The steam must be up always in the human engine. When work at fair prices is scarce, the slop-seller advances, and just keeps the engine going. In very bitterness of heart the tailors of Paris speak of the misery that is upon them and theirs. They looked at the stalls on which French cheap tailors paraded wearing apparel in the Great Exhibition of 1862. Observe their report on the effect of it.

In the collection of the firm of Mallet-Lille, there is a jacket marked 7s. 2½d. There was thirty hours' work in this article. A waistcoat marked 11d. could not have been made in less than six hours. "We leave the world to imagine," say the tailors of Paris, "what the workman got out of the jacket, and the workwoman out of the waistcoat!" In this practical way the tailor-delegates went from stall to stall, bidding the thoughtless bear in mind the price at which these cheap clothes were made. They are made, indeed, of dear cloth and cheap life.

The speculators on the diminution of working

tailors' wages were not allowed to take possession of the market without resistance. The workmen made a stand for their wages. They would not be peaceably ground into middlemen's profits. In the year of Revolution, 1830, they combined and struck ; not against the slop-seller chiefly, but in order to protect themselves against the disastrous consequences of the long dead season, in which a workman often went a month without setting a stitch. The strike produced the most untoward events. The slop-sellers made a great stride. A great many workshops were closed. The workmen who had struck for an increase of wages, preferred to take work from the slop-seller, and perform it at home, to a return to their usual work on the old terms. They intended to better themselves. They believed that they were compelling their old masters to afford them a fairer share of the profits of their work. Alas ! they were digging their own graves. Every stitch they set for the slop-seller, was a progress towards their own ruin. They worked on--their old workshops closed--for the avaricious slop-seller, and slop-selling became the order of the day. Everybody began to buy ready-made clothes ; the slop-sellers' victory was won.

The way in which this victory was signalized and confirmed, is remarkable. The working tailors of the present day acknowledge that they were worsted. Some of the men who combined and struck in 1830 were brought before the Correctional Police. They were warmly defended. On their behalf their advocates dwelt on the enormous profits that master tailors and slop-sellers realized. There was in the

court a greedy ear, on which this statement made a profound impression. Enormous profits sound pleasantly on most ears, save on those of the workmen on whose ill-paid labour they are made. M. Ternaux, who was deputy *procureur du roi* in the court at the time, caught the magic words. He turned them over and over in his mind. He came to the conclusion that by the work of such unfortunate men as those he saw before him, he might fight his way to fortune. He resolved to make the attempt ; and he threw aside the magisterial robe, to become a slop-seller. It was he who established one of the most renowned of the slop-selling establishments of Paris, in the Place des Victoires, under the sign of the Bonhomme Richard ; and the example of this establishment was followed by the creation of many others. Ready-made clothes' shops soon spread through the provincial towns, and always to the disadvantage of the working men. These men carried their grievances before their impartial friends, the Prud'hommes. The Prud'hommes protected them to the best of their powers. Judgments were given in the men's favour, and the slop-sellers appealed to the Court of Cassation ; where the workmen failed. The quarrels and complaints were many ; but they are now almost ended. The slop-sellers have invented a means of holding themselves free from the liability of a summons before the court behind the Chateau d'Eau.

Here is a copy of an agreement that the workman is now obliged to sign before he can get work :—

“ I, the undersigned, acknowledge having received work from the firm of X——, and I hereby engage

never to keep it more than ten days without giving notice to the firm, and stating my reasons for so doing. I also agree to insert the price of each piece of work in my *livret*, and never to ask more for it than shall have been agreed upon at first."

This agreement seems fair enough, but let me observe that a master tailor never avails himself of it, for the simple reason that his work, compared with that for ready-made establishments, gains a fairer price. Such precautions taken by the ready-made warehouses, are abundant proof that workmen have a right to agitate for larger remuneration for their labour. It was only, as I have observed, after a great number of judgments given by the Council of Prud'hommes in favour of workmen that these slop-sellers debated together the means of avoiding the annoyance, and that the agreement above quoted was put into general use. It will be easily understood that when a workman finds himself pressed by want, by the hunger of his wife and little children, he signs this agreement (he would sign any), and is prepared to abide by its consequences; but this instrument is none the less, as the tailors have it, "a collar of torture round the neck of the hungry." These agreements perfectly explain why the Council of Prud'hommes has received no complaint against the ready-made warehouses, for more than a year past.

Before showing what is gained by workmen in ready-made shops, I will endeavour (quoting the working tailors themselves) to refute the reasoning adopted by M. Lemann, in a memorial which he

addressed to the Minister of Commerce in 1857. M. Lemann says :--

" Work become constant, has enabled the workman at the head of a family to employ his wife, his relatives, his children even, according to their aptitude. Thus habits of domesticity have resulted, which have softened and humanized men's natures, and children are better looked after and cared for ; and having good examples before them, have taken pleasure in industry ; and so they give promise of a happier generation, more reasonable and tractable than that of their predecessors."

The delegate tailors protest at once and decidedly, against these affirmations as entirely contrary to truth. The habit of working at home has not bettered the condition of the workman ; neither are the children better looked after, and better cared for, by their parents. So far from ill-paid labour in common having tended to soften the characters of the working people, it has simply been the means of hardening them. As to the tractability expected from children, the tailors trust that "the dignity of the man" will never be stifled by the needs of the workman.

In order to live, the working tailor is obliged to work sixteen hours per diem. There are, indeed, some households in which work ceases neither by night nor by day. While the wife rests, the husband completes a part of the task, and prepares the portion to be done by his helpmate. When he, in his turn, yields to fatigue, the wife rises and takes his place. The woman, being thus compelled to

work as well as her husband, how is it possible that her fate can be a happy one, and that she can bestow care on her children, when she has not even time to attend to her most necessary household duties? For the wife, this hard, joyless life, without compensation of any kind, is perhaps sadder than for the husband, who is sometimes little more than a stranger to her. One by one, all her hopes and illusions as young girl, wife, and mother, leave her; and she bears her fate at last without much repining, well knowing that only on this condition can she and those belonging to her, hope to live. If the wives of Parisian working tailors be consulted, there will not be one found—their husbands admit this—who does not lament her condition. Indeed, how is it possible that a woman placed in this deplorable position, can bring her children up respectably and morally, when the bad understanding and miserable dissensions between the father and mother, caused by privation and hard work, are but too often before their eyes? How is a child to take pleasure in learning a task forced upon it by necessity? For it is too often the case that before a child has quitted his school, he is obliged by his parents to work with them; and it generally happens that these children become bad work-people, without education, or instruction, and incapable of gaining a living by themselves.

The number of workmen, called by M. Lemann the invalids of the craft, is very considerable. He estimates those working for the ready-made shops at 20,000. These he divides in three classes; the

first consists of 3000 individuals, of whom 2500 are men, and 500 women, all able work-people, and working at the same time both for master tailors and ready-made establishments. The second class numbers 9000—5500 men and 3500 women. This class is less experienced, and works exclusively for the slop sellers. The third class consists of 8000—3000 men and 5000 women, who, according to M. Lemann, are merely beginners at their trade; and can do nothing but sew, either from their age, their infirmities, or their want of energy. This statement is false. The working tailors assert that the bad health and infirmities of this class of work-people, is simply owing to the hard work which the industrious man imposes upon himself in the flower of his age, without finding his salary sufficient to keep himself and his family in comfort. They say openly, that these invalids of the craft are for the most part the victims of the ready-made system; which has placed them, before their time, in this inferior position.

M. Lemann gives, also, a table of the earnings of workmen in his employ, out of doors and in-doors. Those out of doors gain, he asserts, on an average, 3fr. 50c. for eight hours' work. Those working indoors, earn 4fr. 50c. for ten hours. A woman earns 2 francs in eight hours, and 3fr. 5c. in ten hours.

The working tailors declare they must be allowed to doubt the correctness of these figures, principally as regards the out-door workman. The average daily earnings of workmen in the employ of master tailors, who pay much better prices than the ready-made warehouses, scarcely amounts to the sum

which M. Lemann states to be the average earnings of the workmen in his employ, in the slop-selling department; and it is not to be supposed that his average is beyond the true average. Further, it should be remembered that the expenses of fire and candle amount to a daily average of 1 franc, which must be deducted from the wages of the out-door worker. M. Lemann asserts again, that workmen having apprentices, are able to increase their earnings to 7 francs for eight hours' work. If it were thus, workmen ought to bless the slop-sellers; for they would never earn this wage in working for master tailors, even with the aid of apprentices. Again, it appears that M. Lemann takes the exception for the rule. It is the same thing with regard to the in-door workmen, gaining 4fr. 50c. for ten hours' work. These men are called *pompiers*, and their occupation consists in re-touching and finishing imperfect clothes—and this is another exception; for among the 1100 workmen that M. Lemann states he employs, there are, at the most, ten working at the price mentioned. To come at the truth, let me quote the statistics compiled for the Chamber of Commerce in 1851:—

"In the trade of ready-made men's clothes, workmen gain on an average 3fr. 60c., and women 1fr. 58c. a day. The dead season lasts four months and three-quarters, and touches a great number of workmen; for there are only 238 (about one in a hundred) attached all the year round to the work-room, and but 4951 who, paid by the day, are habitually employed during a part of the slack season; and but

7440 who work at slop-work. More than 9000 workmen are left often nearly without work, during two-fifths of the year."

In this report the independent observers who drew it up, admitted that the majority of working tailors must labour assiduously from fourteen to eighteen hours daily, to earn the merest necessaries of life. If such men apply to the Assistance Publique occasionally, they are not to be classed with Marshal Soult's shoemaker.

## CHAPTER III.

The Cabinet-Makers—Art-Workmanship and the Subdivision of Labour—The Trôleur—Corporation Mutual Benefit Societies, and Masters' Benefit Societies—The Working Carriage-Builders—Government a bad Banker of Savings—The Paper stainers, and Engravers for Textile Factories—Prison Labour—The Lithographers—The Bronze-workers.

THE cabinet-makers of Paris enjoy a world-wide reputation. Their art-industry has been progressing in reputation since the time of Louis the Ninth. It is with reason that the cabinet-maker plumes himself on the renown which his corporation has achieved. He allies himself with the fame of André Boule and of Riesner; and, comparing the work of to-day with that of the reign of Louis XVI., he perceives that his art-manufacture has steadily advanced; and to-day he would say that it had reached perfection, if to say this were not to deny that there remains no more progress to be made. In the realms of an art-manufacture so peculiarly and exclusively Parisian, where every workman must be highly skilled, I was prepared to find a most prosperous and highly-paid class of working men. But competition and middlemen, at once lazy and greedy, have invaded the cabinet-makers' quarters. Great workshops filled with clumsy workmen, who are taught to make merely

one piece of a certain form of furniture, and who never make more than this particular piece—who are, in short, machines, and not skilled mechanics—produce enormous quantities of cabinet-work for exportation. This is not the solid, well-adjusted art-work which has won renown for Paris workmen. It is a cheap imitation, got out of apprentices and country workmen, massed in establishments where art is not considered. There the true Paris cabinet-maker still works artistically. He is not so happy as he was formerly, according to his own report. He declares that the *patron* does nothing now for the benefit of his workmen. Twenty or twenty-five years ago the *patron* provided the workman's tools, and now he must provide his own tools—an expense for which he receives no compensation whatever.

It is estimated that the cabinet-work of Paris produced every year, is worth more than £4,000,000. The reader may judge from this enormous production, of the number of work-people who live by it. When a workman is asked to report on the condition of himself and his fellow-workmen, he is inclined rather to deepen the shadows, than to intensify the light. In the view the representative cabinet-makers have just taken of their prospects, therefore, I make some allowance for natural over-statement, and still I perceive that this great industry is not in a healthy condition. It is, as the French have it, *exploitée*. Speculation has entered its peaceful quarters. Ignorant boors have approached it, with money, to turn a profit

on its renown. Good sound cabinet-work is dear, for it is the produce of art, and skill, and patient industry. Cheap cabinet-work may be knocked together, by the division of labour, so like the sound and dear, that half the world will not know the good from the bad. And so—as among the tailors, the poor slop-workers arise—the cheap cabinet-makers appear in the faubourg St. Antoine!

The upholstery trade in Paris is a free one. Any man may become an upholsterer; and to this freedom the rapid development of this department of Parisian industry since 1830, is due. The freedom has had its disadvantages, however. The race of modern times is to escape from labour, and to live by distributing the labour of others. It is easier to buy and sell chairs than to make them. The workman spends heavy days over the article; while the tradesman sits in his shop waiting for it. A customer enters, and in a few minutes the tradesman has made more than the workman. Workmen have been cunning enough to discover the disproportion of the reward given to the producer and the distributor; and they have strained every muscle to reach the more profitable and less arduous position. There are now three or four distinct classes of cabinet-makers, namely,—the cabinet-maker who employs workmen, has a shop, and sells the furniture his workshop produces; the master who employs workmen, and sells to the trade; the employer who procures materials from a *patron*, has workmen, and takes contracts second-hand; and the workman who buys his own materials, works at home, and carries

his work to a shop, for sale. This last cabinet-maker is called a *trôleur*. The first of these classes is the legitimate trader of the old school; the second is the manufacturer for exportation. It is this manufacturer who runs after cheapness, at all hazards. The third has split the work of the cabinet-maker into many divisions, and reared men who can make the leg of a table, but could not, under any temptation, put a top upon four legs. By the subdivision of labour great quantities of manufactures are cheaply produced; but the skilled art-workman disappears. The artist dwindles to the plodding mechanic—as even the copyists of the pictures in the Louvre become machines holding a brush. The third and fourth categories of cabinet-makers are cited as real calamities. The fourth class, viz., the man who buys his own materials, and works at home, is generally an indifferent workman, with poor materials. He sells, as fast as he can put his work together, to the shopkeepers of the Rue de Cléry, the Rue Traversière, etc. And last of all, helping to undermine the industry of the true cabinet-maker, there is the dabbler in furniture; who attends sales of bankrupts or people fallen into misfortune. This dabbler buys cheap, and goes direct to a wine shop to dispose of his bargains at a profit. The working cabinet-makers tell us that it is very seldom the man who buys in the sale-room carries away what he buys. The bargain has passed into other hands before it is removed. This traffic is illegal; but it is openly carried on, to the injury of the working cabinet-maker, who has already found

that his wages are only half those of the London cabinet-maker—or 20 francs a week. The London workman can live as cheaply as the Paris workman ; and while the English cabinet-maker is snugly lodged, it is often the Parisian's fate to inhabit a very windy garret.

Having seen the advantages enjoyed by London cabinet-makers, those of Paris have drawn up the wants and wishes of the faubourg St. Antoine. The Paris cabinet-makers demand—a special school for the education of apprentices and workmen ; the responsibility of masters to the Prud'hommes for fair conduct towards their apprentices ; a special council of Prud'hommes, composed half of employers and half of employed; and a corporation mutual benefit society. I shall explain the universal demand for corporation mutual benefit societies, as distinguished from communal benefit societies, presently. The desire for a better control of apprentices is provoked by the fact, that apprentices are not properly taught, that they are little better than errand-boys, and that they are often ill-treated. The law is strong enough to punish masters ; but the law, in the cabinet-makers' trade at least, appears to be in abeyance. The cabinet-makers are prepared to make subscriptions to a corporation mutual benefit society compulsory. They remark that the municipal budget and the finances of the State, supply large sums every year to provide for artisans who are sick or out of work ; and that these expenses would be saved if all workmen were compelled to belong to the mutual benefit society of their corporation. Some of the cabinet-makers appear to

be, meantime, in a most unfortunate plight. Certain masters have been good enough to establish benefit societies in their own workshops. These benefit societies have existed for some time; and they are conducted on a principle ingeniously contrived to put money into the pocket of the employer. Where one of these provident societies exists in an establishment, the principals or the representatives are president, secretary, and treasurer. Now the workmen pay a certain proportion of their earnings into the treasury of this society. They may pay for ten years, and then be discharged from the firm, to whose society they have given part of their wages all this time. Discharged, their claims on the society's funds cease. They may fall ill on the morrow of their discharge, and they will not receive a sou. Their ten years' savings are in the grip of their late masters, and will not bring them a crust of bread. Again, should a firm fail, the savings of all the workmen who are employed in it are lost. There are no accounts given by the masters; and since they may discharge their workmen at any moment, they can always rid themselves of the sickly or importunate. Societies conducted on this unjust principle are enough to disgust working men with provident societies. They see certain percentages taken from their salary to provide for them in sickness, and presently they find that their savings are in their masters' pockets for evermore! These masters' societies have irritated the Paris cabinet-makers, who now ask to have the control of their own savings. As their masters administer workmen's benefit societies, savings mean

a reduction of wages. Some years ago an English firm established a sick fund on this same principle. Every man who applied for work, received a card, which he signed, and by which he was bound to permit a withdrawal of part of his wages for a sick fund—administered by the firm—on which he could have no claim; however, should he be dismissed from, or leave, the firm's employ. This ticket became so obnoxious to the men, who knew how the firm were profiting by their men's compulsory saving, that, when one of the partners stood for a Radical borough, he made the most strenuous efforts to withdraw the obnoxious cards. He succeeded beyond his reasonable expectations; but one or two of these edifying bits of pasteboard are still in existence.

I pass to other artistic workers in wood—viz., the working carriage-builders of Paris. They have discovered that they are not so well paid as English workmen, and that they work more. The English workman is better fed, and has more time to himself. The working carriage-builders obtain skill in their difficult art after many years of hard work; and yet, at last, their pay for ten hours' work, is only 3s. 8½d. Then Sundays and *fête* days are to be taken into consideration. It is proved that the workman who is married and has two children cannot live on his salary. He must work twelve or thirteen hours. He can then only just keep body and soul together. Let him fall ill, and his wife and children at once feel the pinch of hunger. His miserable condition is attributed to the defenceless state of the workmen, who are not allowed to act in common. They desire a tariff, and

regulations made by a committee composed of masters and men in equal numbers. They deplore the production of cheap vehicles, seeing in the cheapness only so much taken from the workman. One master coachmaker, who wishes to obtain custom by underselling his neighbour, begins by reducing the wages of his men. They must have a certain sum of money to pay for rent and food. He graciously extends their hours of labour, that they may make up for the reduction of their wages by over-work. He speculates on the necessities of the workman, who must earn bread for his children. The workman cannot grumble. Let him agree with his brother workmen not to suffer this vile traffic, and he will have to do with the police. The only remedy, according to men who are now suffering, is freedom to band themselves together in a corporation. The coachbuilders reason closely. They say: Invoke the great principle of political economy, that everything is regulated by the law of supply and demand. If the working man could earn wages enough to save sufficient to bear him through the dead season, he might, to some extent, imitate the tradesman who, when goods are cheap, keeps them back--holding back as much as he pleases for a rise in the market. But the workman who is always cramped for means, and cannot help himself, is compelled to offer his labour, whatever the price may be. Employers have meetings where they arrange their mutual interests. Isolation is detrimental to them; and they assemble according to law. Isolation is destructive to the workman; but let him meet his comrades, and the law imprisons

him. Wanting liberty, he cannot act according to the law of supply and demand ; which is, however, used against him. Where, then, is the workman in these fluctuations of prices ? He gains nothing when prices rise, and loses when prices fall. His fate is, a life of struggles, and an old age of beggary.

I pray that the reader will bear in mind I am not making these assertions. I am anxious to see where the poverty is in Paris, and whence it is derived ; and the representatives of the various Paris industries happen to have discussed their grievances under the auspices of a commission appointed by Government. They set forth the latest facts and figures, that will explain to us how it is that the labours of the Assistance Publique are so arduous, and that old age among the Paris working classes is so helpless. The working coachmakers assert that the provision for old age offered by the *caisse* under Government control is, under existing circumstances, unapproachable for nearly every working man.

The paper-stainers, and engravers for textile fabrics, etc., have their own peculiar grievances. The paper-hangings of Paris are celebrated all the world over. They employ a great number of skilled hands, who work according to a tariff arranged by masters and men, at the beginning of each season, on a list of patterns. I imagined that among these workmen, at least, I should find prosperity and contentment. But they have discovered that their English brothers are better paid, although these are inferior to them as workmen. They have other complaints ; and, like their fellow-workmen engaged in various branches

of industry, they have wishes to address to the Imperial Government. They start with the assertion that the French working classes are less favoured by legislation than those of England. They are mistaken in one belief, viz., that all English workmen labour only ten hours a day; an error on which Mr. Potter might enlighten them. They are right, however, in endeavouring to obtain a limitation of the hours of labour, especially as every workman employs a boy between ten and sixteen years of age. These boys work between eleven and twelve hours, and they have two hours for meals; so that they are not free of the workshop until they have been there nearly fourteen hours. They have no time for school. They grow up in the profoundest ignorance. The poverty of their parents chains them to this slave's work: they have been at it from the age of seven or eight, when they could earn 5d. or 6d. a day. They grow up frail in body; and, poor creatures, physically and mentally, they journey through a miserable life to a premature grave. Become men, or the shadows of men, their day's work so completely exhausts them, that they have not the strength to avail themselves of the advantages of the gratuitous adult evening schools. The poor printer has never been able to obtain an increase of wages since 1830. In that year of revolution his day's pay was 3s. 6d., and now, although the price of food has almost doubled, and rents have more than doubled, it is 3s. 6d. still. From this modest sum must be deducted the deductions which the workman suffers for any defect in his work. These

deductions may be unreasonable, and he may appeal to the Prud'hommes. He may even win his cause, but he may become a marked man, and find himself turned from the door of every workshop as a dangerous litigant. Before a master takes on a fresh workman, he usually inquires into the cause of his departure from his last place. The man who has had his former patrons before the Prud'hommes, is not looked upon with favour by patrons generally. But if the printers of paper-hangings are to be pitied in the days of their strength, what shall we say of them when, enfeebled and aged, they have dwindled to the inferior rank of satineurs, and to wages fluctuating between 2s. and 2s. 6d. per diem? What shall we say when we learn that the dead season in the trade of the paper-stainers lasts from the end of July to the end of November? Misery must be sown broadcast, and unhappy fathers must trudge to the *bureau de bienfaisance* of their arrondissement, to beg a visit from the inspector of indigence.

Men engaged in the fancy paper trade of Paris complain of the competition which they have to sustain with prison labour. This labour has reduced their wages; and they grumble against a system which employs the rascal at the expense of the honest man. The complaint has been heard more than once in England. They complain also of the arsenic they are compelled to inhale when working the well-known arsenical green; and they see remedies for all their misfortunes and sufferings in a committee of masters and men, and a co-operative mutual benefit society.

The engravers for textile fabrics are a needy class. They earn little more than two shillings per diem ; and they are out of work half the year. They are not become more patient under distress, now that their delegates have discovered that English working engravers earn at least five shillings per diem. The Paris engravers have executed orders for all the principal manufacturing towns of Europe. These orders have been lucrative—but not to the workmen who have executed them. The engravers have been and are in the hands of speculative middlemen, who race in quest of orders at any price, and still make profits, by lowering the wages of the workmen. This system is carried on in about thirty-five engravers' shops situated in various parts of Paris and the suburbs. The trade is over-stocked so that orders are taken at a figure which means, for the workman, labour at starvation prices. The speculator takes the poorest workmen, for these are his assured slaves. They are thankful for a block to engrave, if they starve while they engrave it. They are men perpetually drowning, and perpetually catching at straws. The poor engraver says, “Glance into my home, and you will see whether I have over-coloured the picture of my distress.”

The engravers on wood, for paper-hangings, are as full of complaints as the above. Their employment is failing, and their wages are not sufficient to supply their simple necessities. Their trade is ruined by the middlemen, who traffic in their labour, and live by cheapening it. The manufacturer is not in direct contact with the artist-workman who engravés his

patterns. He is content to buy in the cheapest market, without inquiring how the cheapness is reached. The Paris wood-engravers for paper-hangings earn, on an average, 3s. 6d. a day. Their protest against the increasing burdens under which they suffer, is very energetic. They affirm that the oppression under which they labour is fast becoming unbearable. Food and lodging are still rising, and wages are still falling. They demand to be able to live by their labour ; and to this end they require liberty to discuss their own intimate interests, that they may be able to resist the encroachments of middlemen.

The Paris lithographic printers complain of the helpless condition in which they are placed by the competition among their employers, which lowers their wages, and by the unfair law that permits their masters to meet, but says to Labour, remain isolated and defenceless.

I now approach some art-industries for excellence in which Paris has long been famous. Paris bronzes are known in every civilized country ; and it is from Paris that our Hunt and Roskells and Elkingtons have drawn their best artists. Then there are important designs for metal work to be made ; when the cunning hand of a consummate artist is required to enrich a commemorative shield, our great firms turn to their French art-workmen - to the Vechtes and Ladeuils. We tempt them from Paris with brilliant offers of money, and the art-workmen who remain behind, deplore the loss of their inspired brethren. But why should the great artists in metal remain

where their genius is left to rust? I echo what the workmen of Paris are saying. I have not ventured on one word of speculation.

The bronze manufactures of Paris, occupying, as they incontestably do, a prominent position in foreign markets, how comes it that this industry, which above all others ought to be active and flourishing, so frequently suffers from a state of depression and stagnation? The frequent recurrence of the dead season, and the low scale of remuneration, must not be attributed to foreign competition, which is next to nothing; neither can the over-abundance of hands be alleged as a reason, since when trade is brisk these are found insufficient; it must, then, be owing to some bad interior organization.

These Paris workers in bronze believe that a remedy for this disorder would be found—and this without detriment to the consumer—if labour had a right to combined action on equal terms with capital, and to refuse to be party to an unjust contract. The conditions then are not equal between the isolated workman offering his labour, and capital that cheapens it. Collective action being denied to the workman, he is bound hand and foot, and left to the mercy of his antagonist. The bronze-workers deny that they desire the power of making noisy and disorderly coalitions; they seem to be well aware that the workman is usually the victim of such crises. They asked the right to protect labour against the avidity of capital, by massing individuals who represent labour, in corporations. Not corpora-

tions like those of old, with obnoxious privileges, but simply societies for the protection of the mutual interest of their members, and for the assurance of a crust and a bed for old age. In short, these workmen seek to form for their humble trades centres of common interest, like those which exist in some of the liberal professions. They want representative committees with strength enough to wrest justice for the workman, from the greedy capitalist. While this power is kept in abeyance by the law, provident societies of all kinds for the working classes will be but weak palliatives applied to an insignificant minority.

The bronze-workers go boldly beyond the representatives of other trades. They assert that association is the only radical remedy for the existing distresses of labour; association in production, spreading over all distinctions, and replacing, antagonistic prejudices by unity of interests. Only in this way, by the gradual extinction of usurious capital, and of parasitical "go-betweens," can workmen hope to obtain security against misfortune and accident, both in youth and age; and to preserve dignity and independence among their equals. Association, by giving a number of individual workmen a common interest in the production of good work, substitutes fruitful emulation for ruinous competition. Paris bronze-workers look to association as the only means of protecting their industry against the formidable rivalry of English capitalists. They see a certain promise of their own success in the flourishing bands of associated workmen who

are grouped around them. But they say also that associated labour must have freedom for its basis. No working men's associations have been established in Paris during the last eleven years, because the law has been unfriendly to them.

The bronze-workers, chasers, and other art-workmen in metal, who are collectively responsible for the above opinions, refute the general idea that they are in the receipt of high wages. A few great artists command extraordinary prices, but we must take the average fairly. It appears that about 80 per cent. of these workmen earn about 3s. 7½d. per diem, rather under than over this sum; and about 15 per cent. command as much as 5s. per diem. Five per cent. remain; these are workmen *hors ligne*, and are paid as Landseer is paid, over and above the price of the poorest limner whose frame touches the ceiling of the Academy. These art-workmen are more intelligent than tailors and shoemakers. They theorize; they have read. They see the defects in the social and economical system of which they are a part. They memorialize the Government for permission to establish a library of books and drawings, that will instruct them and the generation which is to succeed them. They ardently desire to keep up their old renown. They speak with fuller knowledge than workmen of less repute. When they ask the Government to give them the right of meeting for the discussion of their common interests, they point to the existing associations of dramatic authors, of musicians, of notaries, of stockjobbers, of advocates; and say, And why not an association of art-workmen?

The Government, in the person of M. Rouland, Minister of Public Instruction, calls upon the working classes to cultivate "labour and intelligence." Alas! the metal-workers answer, Labour is very difficult without liberty. It leads to frequent distress, and a dependent old age.

## CHAPTER IV.

The Law against Coalitions—The Working Engineers—A cry for Independent Benefit Societies—French Shawl-Designers and Weavers—The Horn Comb-makers—The Workers in White Metals—The Tanners—The Working Printers—Sentiment at the back of a Report—The Printers' Strike—Average Daily Wages of the Paris Working Classes—Their Proportions in the Indigent List.

NEARLY all the trades of Paris agree in tracing their distresses and the decrease of their prosperity, to the law against coalitions, and to the absence of trade mutual benefit societies. There are, as I have indicated to the reader, many mutual benefit societies here, established under State patronage, with mayors and other Government folk for governors and honorary members ; and there are mutual benefit societies, established by firms on the safe principle (for the firms) of pocketing savings without deigning to give any account of them. The working engineers of Paris are loud in their complaints on this subject. Messrs. Cail, Gouin, Calla, and others, have mutual benefit societies belonging to their works, to which their workmen subscribe, but on which they have no claim after they have left the works in which their mutual benefit society is situated. The Paris engineers have remarked, with envy, the length of time English workmen remain on works like those of Maudslay, Field, and Co. ; how the men grow old

in one service; and they regret that it would be difficult to find in Paris five men in a thousand who had been twenty years in the employ of one firm. Hence mutual benefit societies, conducted by firms where the benefit ceases when the subscriber leaves the firm, are most unfair societies. It is impossible for the subscriber to guard against sickness by their agency. There are instances where a workman, who has fallen ill in consequence of the unhealthiness of his employment, has been dismissed, and so put beyond the pale of claimant on the funds to which he has subscribed for years. Where these injustices exist, it is natural that the working men of Paris should desire to take their savings into their own hands, and to decline the intervention of mayor, or adjoint, or employer, or other honorary member set up to watch them.

The working engineers of Paris are—as indeed working engineers are all over the world—thoughtful, solid-minded men. Their labour is not mere mechanical work; it demands skill of eye and arm, and a brain in healthy condition. As they can read the progress of mechanical science in models of engines, so they can dissect systems of labour, and see where one system is good and another is bad. They are discontented when they compare their long hours over piecework, with the well-paid ten hours' daily labour of London working engineers. The London workman earns 6s. for his short day; and when the French workman is paid by the day, his earnings range between 3s. 6d. and 4s. The English workman obtains double pay for night work,

whereas the French workman's over-hours are paid at the same rate as his usual hours. All these differences between the London and the Paris working engineer, are summed up in this statement—that the latter earns 50 per cent. less than the former. The London working engineers belong to the most wealthy trade benefit society in England ; their comfort in sickness and old age is assured ; while the Paris working engineers have no provision for old age, and, with their low wages, and the high price of food and lodging, cannot look hopefully forward. They cry, with the other trades of Paris : Let us have liberty to regulate our own affairs ; let us have our own mutual benefit societies. Our employers can meet to grind down the prices of our piecework ; they can threaten us, when they would reduce us, with the competition of our fellow-workmen who are out of employ ; and so, holding constantly before us the threat of no work, which means starvation and an appeal to the Bureau of Benevolence, they can prosper ; while our wages dwindle, and we live, straitened to-day, and with the prospect of being more straitened to-morrow.

The working engineers ask for free trade in iron, as well as in corn, and in other products ; and they reason well against the ironmasters. They deny the right of the State to protect the few to the disadvantage of the many ; arguing clearly and temperately as becomes men who desire freedom of action and of thought. With free material to work upon, they see a vast extension open to their trade ; and in this vast extension, with liberty to meet given

to labour as it is now accorded to capital, permanent prosperity for themselves and families.

The designers and weavers of the celebrated French shawls complain that they are ill-paid, and that their trade is going from bad to worse. If not in want, they are living from hand to mouth, and feel the lack of liberty to meet and arrange a tariff of prices. They are not in the sad conditions of the *canuts* of Lyons; but they are travelling towards it. The combmakers have grievances that are more serious than many I have met. They work in little shops that are merely cellars, in dirt and without air. They toil in unwholesome heat by stoves, and for at least twelve hours per diem bent painfully over their work all this time. They can earn wages varying from 2s. 6d. to 4s. a day; and these are the tortoise-shell combmakers, who fashion ornaments for ladies' hair! The horn combmakers are a distinct class. These workmen, 700 in number, used to earn from 5s. to 7s. 6d. by ten hours' work. But their wages have been falling since 1848, and they are now a needy race, the prisons being their successful competitors. The work for which they were paid 5s. now costs 1s. 4½d. in the prisons. The consequence is, that the free combmakers are paid 50 per cent. less than formerly, and in some cases less than 50 per cent. No wonder, then, that the free workmen raise a cry against their criminal competitors, and say, "Behold, we are more unfortunate than prisoners. In prison a day's work is eleven hours and-a-half in summer, and ten hours and-a-half in winter. The prisoners have their task

work ; they earn 1s. daily ; they want for nothing, and they are well fed, and well and cleanly lodged. We, free and honest workmen, must work fifteen hours in order to earn enough to support existence. We work twelve hours in the workshop to earn from 2s. 6d. to 3s. ; and then, if we desire to have bread enough for our children, we must carry work home with us. The work is unhealthy ; it attacks the lungs. The combmakers are frequently ill. When ill they must go to the hospital. They have no alternative. Their family make an application to the Bureau of Benevolence. When the slack season comes they can still get work, but at starvation prices. Their position has become worse than it ever was, within the last year. A great india-rubber factory, capable of employing 200 hands, has been established at St. Denis, and employs women only. Women can be had, to work for about 1s. 3d. per diem.

The Paris workers in white metals—in tin, zinc, lead, etc.—are hard-worked, and not sufficiently paid. Taking into consideration the increased price of food and lodging, they estimate their present wages as 40 per cent. less than they were a few years ago. An English workman in tin, etc.—a lamp-maker for instance—earns wages that vary, according to his skill, from 4s. to 7s., working ten hours per diem. The French workman's day is twelve hours, and his wages range from 1s. 8d. to 5s. The masses of workmen engaged in bronze, brass, and iron castings are not more satisfied with their condition, than the tailors are. They have dis-

covered that their English brother earns at least 6s. per diem, for ten hours' work ; that life in London is to the workmen as cheap as life in Paris, and that consequently the Englishman is better off than the Frenchman. The remedy, according to the Paris metal-casters, is—association ; not a committee of workmen to confer with employers, nor a trade benefit society, but simply association—which makes the workman his own capitalist and master.

The Paris tanners of leather of all kinds, complain that their wages are always 30 per cent. less than the wages of English tanners ; and in some cases they are only half ! The discovery has not pleased our friends of the odiferous banks of the Bièvre. They insist that the condition of Paris workmen has not been satisfactory for the last forty years ; and that the powerless plight to which the workman has been reduced, has driven one man to put his labour in competition with his next door neighbour, and so the capitalist has been enabled to take the cheaper of the two. Hence the gradual, but incessant, fall of wages in every trade of the capital.

There are between 4000 and 5000 working printers in Paris, including machinists, pressmen, and compositors. This important body of workmen, helped by hundreds of prematurely developed boys, known to us as printers' devils, produces all the papers and books which see the light in Paris. The majority of the compositors are in needy circumstances. Those who have no settled employ on newspapers, and who are estimated at 2000, can earn only 2s. 6d. per diem

when they are at work. But there are many days when they are not at work, and then they must feel the pressure of want. They complain that the printing-office has become a field of suffering.\* The loss of time is greater than it used to be. The work is more uncertain. The workman finds himself sitting in an office waiting half the day before he obtains work. The master printer keeps him there, because when work comes a great number of hands can dispose of it in a very short time. Compositors have, in short, a miserable life in Paris, unless they are attached to the office of some daily newspaper, or are privileged in a special office. Their wages are lowered by fierce competition, by hordes of apprentices taken recklessly by masters, and, lastly, by the competition of women.

I have before me the large yellow reports of the Assistance Publique. They are weighty volumes of observations and statistics, admirably arranged and printed. They include the statistical history of the poor of Paris from the year x to the 31st of December 1861. They set forth a moral view of the indigent. Upon the back of one of these reports is a little sentimental picture. Upon a wretched bed lies a sick man. At his bedside stands, in a radiant light, the good angel Charity. Charity, with her right hand, gives help to the dying man; and her left hand holds aloft an ample cloak that shelters from the cold without, the sick man's wife and children. I was surprised, I confess, to find this little drawing printed, by way of ornament, on a statistical report of the pauperism of the French capital. Would not

the English reader, who had occasion to consult one of our Poor-law blue books, start if he found upon the cover of the book a drawing of an angel, in the shape of a Poor-law commissioner, handing a cup of tea to a sick man with one hand, and folding the invalid's family to him, with the other ?

The sentiment upon the cover of the Assistance Publique report, appears stranger still to the man who has listened to the complaints of the working printers. It is not very long since that these printers, goaded by what they conceived to be their wrongs, formed a coalition to resist a proceeding that, to their minds, threatened to reduce them to pauperism. The working men of Paris suffer much before they venture to break a law that holds fine and imprisonment over them. We have seen that they all cry with one voice against this law which gives them over, bound hand and foot, to the employer. But they obey the law and suffer its consequences, until some extraordinary oppression maddens them into a combined resistance. Who was it, then, that drove the working printers into unlawful coalition, and so to prison (to be presently pardoned by the Emperor) in 1862 ? Who sent trouble and perturbation through the printing trade ? Under the sentimental engraving I see the well-known name of Paul Dupont, printer to the chief office of the Assistance Publique. It was of this printer to the administrators of public charity the compositors had to complain. He had, in order to obtain printing at the lowest possible price, introduced women into his printing-office ; whereupon his workmen, in high

dudgeon, said : The real position of women in a printing-office is misunderstood. In opposing their introduction the Paris compositors do not go against the sex, but against workers who labour at low wages. They understand and admit the right of a master to procure the cheapest labour possible, but they also claim for those who suffer by it, the right of opposition to such innovation. The introduction of women took place in several printing-offices at the very moment when the demand of the compositors for higher wages was being discussed. The end desired was easily seen. It is to be doubted if society is bettered socially and morally by giving to women the labour which belongs of right to the father of a family. What is to be done with children calling in vain to their natural support for daily bread ? When, about a year ago, after more than one trial and condemnation, wages were at last raised, it was only on an average at the rate of 35 or 40 centimes a day. This, then, is the actual position of the Paris compositor. During the last twelve years rent and the price of food have increased at least 50 per cent., while the salaries have hardly risen 9 or 10 per cent. The result need scarcely be described ; the worst part of the story being that it is impossible to tell how long even this deplorable state of things may last.

Even this fleeting increase of wages was not gained without many sacrifices.

After having done everything to avoid a conflict, after having resolutely opposed themselves to the continued refusals of masters, and after appealing in

vain to Government, the workmen found themselves breakers of the law. They were arrested-- some twenty of them--amongst whom were the commissioners appointed to negotiate with the masters. They endured, for a month, the pains of cellular confinement. They were afterwards condemned to a further term of imprisonment, which they were only prevented from undergoing by an appeal to the Emperor. They were not ungrateful, and not insensible to the promptitude with which their anxieties were relieved by the head of the State; but now they dare to hope for something beyond pardon, and to look for change in a system which is so little in accordance with the time. Imprisonment, it will be seen, has not intimidated them.

According to them, the only real and efficacious plan for the gradual and peaceful emancipation of the working classes is association; association not simply for individual benefit, but a broad and fruitful system, established on such a base that all may profit by it. "Then only," say the compositors, "may we hope to see ease and comfort, little by little, spread around us; then we shall cease to witness the increase of misery in the lower grades of society, while above us grow and accumulate the colossal fortunes of to-day." In conclusion, the working printers demand, like their brethren in other trades, the repeal of the law on coalitions; the right to meet and discuss wages, and the conditions on which they will labour; and subventions by the State of working men's associations.

I have now glanced at the present condition and

described the aspirations of the working men belonging to the chief industries of Paris. Their statements may be implicitly relied on—since they are given to the world after examination by the picked men of each industry. The tendency of Paris trades, like the tendency of London trades, is not to promote the welfare of the working classes. The vast increase of the trades peculiar to Paris tends to cheapen luxuries, but not necessities. The workmen, prevented by law from helping one another, see their condition grow worse every hour; since the competition among their masters grows keener day by day—and they can undersell only by lowering wages. Leather remains at its old price, but the shoemaker stitches cheaper than formerly. Cloth remains dear, but the slop-seller can get it put together in the slop-workers' garret, at a starvation price. Competition cheapens wages, the Paris artisans cry, and not raw material. Corn and meat, and butter and eggs, and wine, rise, and still rise. These are workmen's necessities. A cheap *redingote* is not a necessity to him, nor is a cheap silk hat. His wages represent food for his children, and lodging for them; and both food and lodging are dearer than ever. The intelligence with which the vivacious Paris workmen put these points, is only equalled by the tenacity with which they hold to them. They are never tempted into a bypath. They see the reason of their gradual decadence; and the Government having wisely given them an opportunity of stating their wishes in an authoritative manner, they have agreed in a unanimous request for freedom of discussion, and trade benefit societies.

The last report of the Assistance Publique authorities shows that the Paris workmen have not complained without reason. The majority of them cannot save; they can hardly live. One man is the enemy of his fellow, because hunger drives one man to undersell his brother in the labour market. The men might all meet, and agree to work for a certain price; and so prevent the rapacious dealer in cheap labour--the sweater and the bowelless middleman--from taking new contracts, and seizing upon the market, by extorting new privations from the sons of labour. "Let us meet"--all the Paris workmen answer, when asked what their wants are. We are in penury; we hang about the Bureau of Benevolence; our fathers are in the asylum, because we may not speak our wants, and stay the unholy traffic in our happiness by which our employers prosper. A table, which I have made up from the statements of the working men themselves, shows the average daily wages of the working classes of Paris:—

	s. d. s. d.
Journeymen printers, . . . . .	2 6
Machinists, . . . . .	6 0
Printers' boys, . . . . .	1 0
Lithographic printers, . . . . .	3 10
Working engravers (for fabrics), . . . . .	2 0
Wood engravers (for paper-hangings), . . . . .	3 6
Compositors (not regularly engaged), . . . . .	2 6
Shoemakers, . . . . .	2 0 to 2 6
Glovecutters, . . . . .	2 10
Combmakers, . . . . .	3 0 to 4 0
India-rubber combmakers (women), . . . . .	1 3 to 1 8
Tailors (working for master tailors), . . . . .	3 9
Tailors (working for ready-made houses), . . . . .	3 0
Ditto, women, . . . . .	1 3
Working coachmakers, . . . . .	3 9

	s. d. s. d.
Working saddlers, . . . . .	2 6 to 3 0
Working cabinet-makers, . . . . .	2 6
Working engineers, . . . . .	3 6 to 4 0
Chasers, workers in bronze, turners, etc., . . . . .	3 8 to 4 10

We shall now see which are the industries that recruit the army of 90,000 recipients of charity, who come annually within the action of the Assistance Publique. By the help of this table the reader will be enabled to judge of the truth of the workmen's statements. It is true that there are hereditary dependants on the gifts of the Bureau of Benevolence; but when it is found necessary to give charity to 1 in every 16 of the population of a city like Paris; and when we find that the people who need this charity are working people, we may take it for granted that life is hard among the working classes generally. The following table describes the callings of the heads of families who were on the books of the Assistance Publique in 1861, the date of the last return:-

Engineers, machinists, piano-makers, farriers, overlookers, . . .	582
Spinners, printers on fabrics, turners, glovemakers, refiners, paper-stainers, cabinet-makers, gasfitters, railway officials, chair-turners, . . . . .	2,406
Bronze-workers, gilders, lampmakers and tinniers, carpet-makers, saddlers, trimming-makers, gunmakers, weight-makers, cutlers, nailers, hatters, working goldsmiths, umbrella and toy-makers, pasteboard makers, combmakers, binders, button and paper-makers, brush and fanmakers, artificial flower-makers, printers, packers, goldbeaters, glovers, pocketbook-makers, weavers, tanners, . . . . .	2,708
Journeymen carpenters, stone-workers, masons, stucco-workers, paviors, marble-workers, plumbers, locksmiths, house-painters, sawyers, etc., . . . . .	2,404

	Brought forward,	8,100
Bricklayers' labourers, sweeps, navvies, etc., . . . . .	1,528	
Tailors, shoemakers, shirmakers, slop-workers, . . . . .	2,205	
Servants of wine-shop keepers, butchers, cooks, tripe-sellers, pork - butchers, restaurateurs, distillers, confectioners, chemists, pastrycooks, grocers, wholesale houses, . . . . .	719	
Small dealers—as hawkers of fruit, newspapers, wood and coke dealers, old clothesmen, . . . . .	896	
Working sculptors, decorative painters, designers, engravers, chasers, press readers, compositors, lithographers, glass-cutters, . . . . .	441	
Literary men, teachers, teachers of foreign languages, interpreters, musicians and singers, various artists, dancers, . . . . .	80	
Clerks in commerce, public offices, and railways, . . . . .	344	
Concierges, drivers, stable-men, watchmakers, bakers, matress-makers, sewerage-men, night-men, . . . . .	366	
Rag-pickers, street-sweepers, water-carriers, . . . . .	1,042	
Orphans under 16 years of age, not apprenticed, the blind, lame, and idiots, . . . . .	616	
Total,	19,764	

Every trade and calling is represented in this table; but the tailors and shoemakers, taking their numbers into account, appear to be at the head of it, as, by their own account of their wages, I was led to expect. We now come to the numbers of indigent families — that is, of families receiving charity—of which women are the head :—

Women in factories, as weavers, spinners, workers in the tobacco manufactory, etc., . . . . .	783
Pasteboard workers, artificial flower-makers, polishers, fringe-makers for shawls, feather-dressers, brush and button makers, binders, . . . . .	1,228
Embroiderers in gold or silk, dressmakers, etc., sewing-machine women, staymakers and lace-workers, straw-plaiters, . . . . .	1,510
Needlewomen, waistcoat and trousers-makers, umbrella-makers, 2,751	
Shoe-bindlers, capmakers, carpet-bindlers, glovemakers, saddle-makers, bandage-makers, . . . . .	875
Women engaged in washing and preparing linen, . . . . .	1,562

	Brought forward,	8,709
Street sellers of fruit, clothes, cakes, sweetmeats, gingerbread, newspapers, market women,		966
Artists, printers on porcelain and enamel, actresses, and midwives,		119
Governesses and teachers,		41
Domestic servants,		4,684
Women engaged in match-making and mattress-making,		72
Rag-pickers, sweepers, chairmenders, etc.,		1,418
Orphans under 16 years of age and not apprenticed, the blind and lame, idiots, and epileptic subjects,		940
	Total,	16,949

In this list domestic servants and needlewomen are in the majority.

## CHAPTER V.

The Great Workshops—The Exhibition of the Fine Arts applied to Industry  
—Art Students—Democratic Workshops—Alexandre's Organ Factory  
at Ivry—A Model Workmen's Village—The Alexandre Mutual Benefit  
Society—Singing Classes are lawful—The Abbé Bonaud.

I now approach the working men of Paris, who belong to the *grands ateliers*; that is to say, who work collected in large bodies. We shall see whether they are better off, as infinitesimal parts of a great machine, than they were when two or three skilled workmen were associated together for the production of artistic articles of luxury or use. No arguments in favour of the little workshops of old that are based only on the well-being of working men will, I am aware, prevail; and induce consumers to buy at a fractionally higher rate than that at which the great manufacturers are able to sell. Commerce is bowelless. No sentimental questions about starvation prices or the future of workmen, enter into the consideration of shopkeepers and customers. Men will buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest, whether the weaver of the goods, the builder of the upholstery, or the maker of the clothing, be starving or not; so that if the art manufactures for which Paris is famous can be made by brigades of workmen or by machinery, at a cheaper rate than

on the old system, they will be so made. I have already touched on the discussion that has been going forward in Paris as to the relative merits of factory workmen and of home workmen. It has been stoutly maintained that the artistic character of all those useful and useless things known as *articles Paris*, has of late degenerated; the free play of the art-workman's mind being fettered under workshop rules. But this assertion must not be too hastily accepted. The Exhibition of the Fine Arts applied to industry in the Palais de l'Industrie, was an incontestable proof that the most celebrated designers in France are employed in the great workshops of Paris. Along the north gallery were the paintings and drawings designed for Paris manufacturers. There, also, were the drawings and modelings from the free schools of Paris and the departments. The schools made a brilliant show--which all who are inclined to hold that the fine arts, as applied to industry, are degenerating in France, should have examined. Some of the drawings and models were exquisite examples of correct and tasteful power. From these schools will come the next generation of French art-workmen. In the northeast gallery of the palace were the works of the industrial artists who now supply designs and models to French manufacturers. A reference to the catalogue showed that most of these designers had been in public schools, and had studied in the *ateliers* of great contemporary painters and sculptors. David (d'Angers) has instructed many of the industrial artists who now design and execute models for the

bronzé manufacturers of Paris. Others have been inspired and taught by Pradier, or Delaroche, or Léon Cogniet. Women figured conspicuously by their grace and patience in delicate modelling, and in the ornamentation of china. The majority of these artists, both men and women, are employed by large manufacturers like Barbedienne, Miroy Frères, Lefèbure and Son, Biètry, and others. The art-manufactories of Paris, therefore, are not likely to lack well-educated designers. It is contended, however, that the bad effect of large workshops is, that it puts the minds of the men who work out the designs, in slavery. The workmen, parted into groups to make a piece of furniture or a machine, have nothing to do with the conception of it. If they see an improvement to be made, they can only modestly hint it to the director who is placed over them. They hardly dare to say that they see their way to remedy an admitted defect, lest they should wound the susceptibilities of their superiors, whose business it is to conceive and design. A great workshop is a strictly governed kingdom, in which every man must keep himself in his place. The workman, having once taken his place, is not encouraged to rise from it to a better. He is in an admirably-conducted establishment, where the men who are over him are undoubtedly superior to him by their general and technical knowledge. They have been pupils of great manufacturers and renowned artists. They hold their empire easily, over groups of workmen whose education is limited to some small department of a great industry. A writer in the *Siecle*

has proposed, by way of counteracting the degradation of the faculties of the many in large workshops, that the *régime* of these workshops should be popularized ; that it should become democratic. But it is not so easy to prove that democratic workshops would be commercially profitable. Let us see what kind of success Paris workshops have under their present government ; the wages workmen can earn in them ; the provision that is made for sickness and old age, and the amount of pauperism traceable to the *grands ateliers* system, premising that out of the 64,813 manufactories said to exist in and around Paris, not more than 7117 employ more than ten workmen.

At Ivry, at the southern extremity of Paris, there is a vast establishment that may be taken as an example of what a French manufactory should be. Its history, or rather the history of its founder, is interesting. M. Alexandre began life as a simple workman. By his own ingenuity and talent he contrived, so far back as the year 1829, to found a modest little *atelier* for the construction of pianos, etc. He was an excellent type of a French working man. Conscientious, always inquiring and in search of improvements, he could not but excel in the manufacture to which he devoted his life. He persevered from year to year in making experiments in the free reed. The result of his perseverance was the production of an instrument now known all the world over as the " Alexandre Harmonium." His *atelier* grew year after year, until, in 1848, it became necessary to remove it from the centre of Paris, and to

build in the suburbs. The park and the old Louis XIV. chateau of Ivry were purchased, and the spacious and elegant architectural building, now known as "Alexandre's Harmonium Manufactory," was built. The workshops could not be surpassed for neatness and completeness of arrangement. They are so exquisitely clean that they look as if they had been liberated from the builder's hand yesterday. The order that reigns through this great establishment, where more than 500 men are always at work making harmoniums, is admirable—as it is, in truth, in most large French factories. The plan of the series of operations which result in the production of a cheap harmonium, is most elaborate. A visitor can see all the operations in a very short time. He can start from the yard where the timber is stacked and seasoned; through the sawing shops, past the steam saws that carve wood; through smiths' shops, where iron, copper, and steel are worked; through the noisy tuning departments, where skilled men are trying the reeds; to the shops where the instrument is put together (every instrument being adjusted, taken to pieces, and put together again a second time); to the vast show-rooms, where harmoniums in every variety of artistic case, and adapted to the purse of both rich and poor, are stowed by the hundred; to be presently shipped to every part of the world, but chiefly to England. Of the 800 instruments completed monthly in this factory, 600 are spread over the United Kingdom. They are so cheap and easily played, that they are welcome additions to village meeting-houses and school-rooms; and find their way

into the homestead, and the parlour of tradesmen who cannot afford a piano. Here there is a humanizing luxury brought within the reach of the masses, by the skilful subdivision of labour! It would be impossible to produce these instruments in a small *atelier* at the price at which they are now sold; nor would the workmen engaged in this establishment earn more, if they were banded together in little groups, than they gain in the spacious workshops of Messrs. Alexandre and Co. The wages paid to the men vary, of course, with the nature of the work they are able to perform. It stands to reason that the tuner or regulator is better paid than the hewer of wood in the timber-yard. I find that the highest wages paid in the factory are 15 francs, or 12s. a day; and that the lowest wages are 3½ francs, or 2s. 11d. a day; the average wages being between 5 francs and 6 francs a day. It will be seen that this average is higher than that of any of the industries I have hitherto touched upon.

Ivry is a little township of narrow streets, surrounded by a flat country, intersected with deeply rutted roads. It appears to be inhabited by an exceedingly bibulous race, since there is one wine-shop to every thirty inhabitants. The great factory in its suburbs, has brought new prosperity to the place, and has greatly improved it, by adding a large colony of skilled workmen to its population. But Messrs. Alexandre were not content to bring all their workmen from the centre of Paris into this straggling township, and leave them to lodge over wine-shops or in *greniers*, subject to all the temptations of a place

where drinking appears to be the fashionable amusement ; and where Bacchus receives the greater part of the wages of labour. On some fine rising ground at the end of the park, well watered and timbered, a model workman's village was laid out, to consist of fifty-two houses, divisible by back and front entrances, into one or two *ménages*. It is one of the brightest and happiest and quietest spots that I can call to mind. The houses are substantially built cottages, embedded in gardens that, when I was there, were packed with flowers of every hue. There is everything at hand for the tenant's use, in the shape of wells, pumps, etc. The houses slope up the hill, and may be seen from a distance, framed in trees. The firm built these fifty-two cottages for their men, in order to keep them free from the temptations incident to a walk back to Paris every evening. Yet, at first, many of the men objected to move their household gods from the wretched garrets in which they were huddled in the centre of Paris, to one of these snug and healthy cottages. It was difficult to make them see the advantage of a separate healthy home. The director who walked over the village with me said—" It is almost impossible to make many of them care about their homes. We pay them their wages once a fortnight, when they will pay the debts they have contracted for living ; and, with the balance left in hand, will go from cabaret to cabaret, and seldom return to the factory until all the wages have been spent. We pay them on Saturday afternoon, and many will not return to work until the following Wednesday."

This remark applies, of course, only to the lower class of workmen. The tuners and overseers, who earn their 12s. a day, can afford to occupy one of these cottages of four rooms and offices, and to pay £24 a year rent for it. He is a superior man, although not much addicted to a home life. This life out of doors, which all classes in France lead, is the bane and curse of the workman's family, and nothing whatever is done to mitigate it. Messrs. Alexandre are too anxious for the welfare of the men and families dependent on them to miss the least opportunity of making their workmen provident. For some years past they have established a mutual benefit society under regulations which have been approved by a Minister of State.

The masters, overseers, and workmen engaged in the manufactory of Messrs. Alexandre, wishing to establish a mutual benefit fund, have issued a list of rules, the observance of which is compulsory, a copy being furnished to each person concerned. These rules are as follow :—The society is composed of members and honorary members. The honorary members deposit an annual sum of 25 francs. The members deposit 1 franc a fortnight, to be deducted from their pay. Every overseer or workman in Messrs. Alexandre's manufactory must either be a member or an honorary member. A workman entering the establishment during the course of the fortnight makes his first deposit in the following fortnight, and must be fifteen days in the manufactory before doing so. He is visited by the doctor, to prove that there is no impediment to his admission.

A workman quitting the establishment ceases to be a member; but if he is discharged for lack of work, and if he has received no assistance from the society, he has a right to the following reimbursement:—After six months' employment, 6 francs; one year, 12 francs; two years, 24 francs; three years and upwards, 36 francs. Voluntary departure, or a stay of less than six months, gives no right to any reimbursement whatever. A workman leaving through illness, must provide himself with a certificate, which he must show to the doctor. If the illness compels him to be absent more than three days, he has a right to 2 francs a day from the fourth day; he can also claim medical attendance and medicine.

No subscriber can receive more than 180 francs, being ninety days' pay, during one illness. But he may continue to claim doctor's attendance and drugs, for a year. A workman meeting with an accident during his work, has a right to the same assistance. He can claim the 2 francs from the first day, and as long as his accident prevents him from working, provided that pecuniary aid does not go beyond the sum of 300 francs. No assistance is given in the case of illness caused by debauchery or intemperance, nor for wounds received in a fight, when the member has been the aggressor. Should the city be attacked by an epidemic, or any similar scourge, any members suffering from it, would have a right only to medical assistance and the necessary drugs. There is a doctor at Paris and one at Ivry, as well as a chemist and druggist, attached to the society. The Paris

doctor receives 500 francs a year; the doctor of Ivry, 700 francs.

The chemist furnishes no drug without the prescription of the doctor; he must also send his bill every month to the manufactory. The patient must visit the doctor as long as he is able, and when it becomes necessary that he should receive attendance at home, he must make it known in writing, and must apply to the director, if the doctor neglects to fulfil his duty. The members are obliged to visit the patients in turn, and report the state of their condition to the director. A patient wishing to be attended by his own doctor may still have his medicine from the chemist of the society, if he clearly states on the prescription that it is on account of the society.

A member seized with sudden and severe illness may at once send for a doctor in the neighbourhood, giving at the same time notice to the doctor of the society. These visits are paid 2 francs each by the society. The doctor states on the certificate what day the patient will be able to resume work. In case of the death of one of the members, the wife or family of the deceased receives 50 francs for the expenses of the funeral.

Should an exceptional case occur which is unprovided for by the rules of the society, the director calls a meeting of the four overseers of the establishment, that they may confer together and decide the case by a majority. Any disagreement which may arise in the society is decided by two arbitrators, selected by the interested parties. If they

fail in coming to a decision the matter must be arranged by a third arbitrator, selected by the director of the factory. M. Mendès, manager of the manufactory of Messrs. Alexandre, is intrusted with the general management of the society. He keeps the books and the capital, for which he is responsible. Every year he renders an exact account of the position of the society, which account must remain eight days in one of the offices of the factory, open to the inspection of all the members.

The reader will easily perceive the grave objections to a mutual benefit society constituted like that which affords relief in sickness to Messrs. Alexandre and Co.'s workmen. But for these defects the firm are not in the remotest degree to blame; their society is as liberal as the law will permit it to be. It is entirely in the hands of the director of the factory. The men have not the government of their own savings. They are held in hand, like children. Our working men are in the habit of governing their own mutual benefit societies and other institutions. But, then, committees of English workmen can call meetings of their fellow-men. They can debate and settle their own rules. They are independent, and they have shown extraordinary ability in the government of their own affairs. Are they not, at the present moment, establishing clubs for themselves in every part of the kingdom, in humble imitation of the splendours of Pall-mall? The French workman can have neither club nor reading-room, nor benefit society, that is his own. He enjoys the privileges of universal suffrage, but he may not meet nineteen

of his fellow-workmen to discuss the furtherance of their mutual interests. Only a short time ago the Abbé Bonaud was brought before the correctional police at Avignon for punishment. And what was his offence? The Abbé is very fond of music, and has been known at Avignon for twenty years, as chapel-master. He is greatly esteemed, and appears to have done much good by developing the musical faculties of his fellow-townsman. Sent to Cavaillon, he imprudently resolved to bring the young people of the country round about, together into a singing class. They were to be called the *Orphéonists* of Saint Cécile. The good Abbé had forgotten the law which forbids associations or meetings of more than twenty persons, and he was called before the tribunals of his country for breaking it. It is true, he was acquitted on the ground that the imperial sanction is not required to start a chorus, or lead a band. But had the unfortunate *Orphéonists* under the Abbé Bonaud been guilty of the misdemeanour of discussing any little matter for their personal benefit; had they been guilty of making provision among themselves for their old age, or debated any local improvements, they would have felt the strong arm of the law. The Government will not permit free collective action to the working classes. They are brought up, and compelled to live, in a state of tutelage. They are taught to expect everything from the Government. They have neither temperance leagues, nor trades' unions, nor clubs, nor reading-rooms. Their only common ground, where they can meet their fellow-workmen, is the wine-shop. An English

workman, if he have good capacity, is promoted to places of trust by his fellow-workmen. He is an Odd Fellow, a Forester, or a Druid. He is a secretary to a mutual improvement society ; he is on the committee of one or two little clubs. These responsibilities raise him in his own esteem, and in that of his companions. He is a stout champion of the dignity of his class ; and, if need be, he can speak with effect. He is a man ; but imperial law makes the French workman a child all his life.

Messrs. Alexandre's factory is, I must repeat, in all respects a model establishment. The men work in healthy shops. They have comfortable and even luxurious homes in their model village close at hand. They have regular work and good wages. The Mutual Benefit Society of the establishment affords them an allowance in sickness and funeral money after death. And what is the result ?- The model village, that is bowered in trees and bright with flowers, the rooms of which are better than many students round the Panthéon would dream of inhabiting, is a failure. The men would not inhabit one-half of it if they were not, in a measure, compelled. Their rent is regularly deducted from their wages ; that of the lower class of workmen, or the bachelor workmen, being £12 per annum. The rents return only three per cent. interest on the capital which has been expended in the building of the village ; so that it cannot be said that the firm gain much by lodging their own workmen. Nowhere else could these men get the accommodation they have here at the price Messrs. Alexandre charge them.

They are close to their work ; whereas formerly they had three or four miles to walk, to and from the factory, through rain and snow, and along dismal roads. But so little thankful are they for their cottages and gardens, that the firm will not enlarge the village. It is, in short, not a success.

Here is a factory that produces, as I have said, 800 harmoniums or chamber-organs every month ; most of which are intended for the amusement of people of limited means. They are instruments which every well-to-do working man could afford to buy for his family. I asked the director how many of the men in his employ had purchased harmoniums. He laughed at the idea that the makers of a musical instrument would enjoy the harmonies of it. He told me that in all the model village there was only one harmonium, and that a four pound. one. It is calculated that there are already 30,000 of Messrs. Alexandre's harmoniums in English homes ; by far a greater number than there are in France -- a fact that shows how rapidly a love of music is spreading among the English people. Most persons would be apt to take it for granted that the French working classes are more in musical than the English. They would be in error ; and no better proof of such error could be given than the fact that out of the hundreds of men employed by Messrs. Alexandre, only one has cared to possess one of their instruments.

## CHAPTER VI.

Paris Upholstery and Cabinet-Work—Paris Salons—Furnishing a Régime—The Carvers in Wood—Swiss and Paris Carving—French Designs—A Wood-Carver's Workshop—The Fortnightly and Monthly Payment of Wages—Burning the Candle at both Ends.

UPHOLSTERY and cabinet-work occupy an immense number of men and women in Paris. Artistic furniture of the most costly description, comes out of the Quartier St. Antoine, of the Popincourt district, and from the south bank of the Seine. The fame which the cabinet-makers of Paris enjoyed centuries ago, was buried in the flames of the first French Revolution. Men continued to make that which was necessary, that which was positively useful; but they ceased to fashion those monuments of artistic ornamentation, which are destined to brighten royal boudoirs, or to furnish State offices. In order that an industry like the art cabinet-work of Paris may flourish, prosperity must be general, and there must be gigantic fortunes about. The least financial depression or political trouble, affects instantly the interests of the art-workmen. The condition, therefore, of the Paris cabinet-makers and wood-carvers, in the early years of the present century, was unfortunate.

The furniture of the First Empire was square

and solid, but was angular and harsh ; and, as the French have it, " it reposed on no style, and therefore could not last." It was not until some years after Louis Philippe had become Citizen King, that the upholsterers and cabinet-makers of Paris were enabled to turn to the glorious traditions of their trade, and to produce great and costly art-works, based on the old styles in vogue among their fore-fathers. The world was at peace, and was prosperous ; and there were fortunes that could support the boldest flights of the art-workmen. But this prosperity was not destined to be of long duration. The industrial crisis of 1848 carried desolation into the *ateliers* of the Quartier St. Antoine ; and then, again, all the simplicities of a bran new Republic were gradually exchanged for the gaudy splendours of a great military Court. Since 1851, the Paris cabinet-makers and wood-carvers, and bronze manufacturers, have been making continual progress. The industrial exhibitions which have been held, have fitfully stimulated their energies ; but their steady progress is unquestionably due to that growing love for display and for luxuries of all descriptions, which has, at length, become a universal passion. The great Paris *salons* of the present day surpass in luxury and costliness, those of any former period. Every man who makes his little stroke of fortune on the Bourse, frames himself in silk damask, shaves before a Venetian glass, saunters upon Aubusson, and eats his *filet aux truffes* for his modest breakfast, on his carved oak dining-table ; while his coffee is being served on the sculptured pear-tree *buffet*, in *Sèvres* !

Now is the time for the workman who can carve the arms of the *parvenu* in oak, or cut his crest in the finer fibre of the pear-tree. These hundreds of mighty commercial grandees who have sprung up within the last few years, have built themselves town hotels and country seats, and they clamour after the art that is to furnish them as becomes their new-born dignity. It is not a house nor a palace which can make the prosperity of any department of Paris art-workmanship. The Quartier St. Antoine is furnishing a *régime*. A new empire is taking to housekeeping, and will have the dearest and the best of everything.

The wood-carvers of Paris, according to their masters, are a flourishing race. They never want work if they are skilful ; for their employers have always plenty of orders on hand. The best men, indeed, command the masters, since good wood-carvers are scarce. A patron told me that the men understood their power thoroughly, and were not slow in taking advantage of it. "They come and go," he said, "as they please." I dare not say anything to them. Sometimes a man will come to his work, determined to remain at it ; and presently a friend will drop in upon him and invite him to a game of billiards, or to take a glass of beer, and he will be away for two, and even three, days. They come and go at their own hours. None of them earn as much as they might. They are very fond of pleasure. They drink, of course ; but not to make themselves completely drunk. You will see that they are more intelligent and cultivated than ordinary workmen ; they pride themselves on being artists.

All the men in the trade know each other, and they are constantly visiting one another's quarters. This gay life is their delight. They work in order to give themselves money, to be spent in lively, sociable parties."

I asked this patron if he had no means of restraining the vagabond propensities of his workmen; and whether he could not prevent idle men from distant quarters, from coming into his workshops to tempt his hands away from their benches. He answered, that if he were to speak a word on the subject to any man, he would at once go off to another master—or patron, for master he has none. The men all look in the most unfriendly spirit on their employer. They are hot-headed and quarrelsome. I then asked this patron of wood-carvers what would be the effect of giving his men the liberty to combine for common action, in the protection of their own interests. He answered, "I believe that this power could not be safely given to them. Were it granted, I should give up business at once. We patrons would be their slaves and creatures. In my trade the men have more power than enough now. Our working men have not the sobriety of temperament of the English working classes. We should soon have them crying and shouting in the streets."

I described to this employer the quiet manner in which the operatives behaved during the strike of the working builders in London—how they peaceably met, passed their business resolutions, and peaceably separated. He was astonished; and gave it as his opinion that it would be impossible, having due

regard to the maintenance of public peace, to permit thousands of Paris workmen to assemble for the discussion of their interests. This employer told me he once had two hands who had been at work in London. They had told him, to his inexpressible astonishment, that London working men imposed the prices at which a job might be executed, on their fellow-workmen. He indignantly denied that such a state of things could exist in Paris. He was already more than sufficiently controlled by his men. Skilled labour being scarce in his industry, it commanded. He had no control over it, and when he had orders to execute, had to wait the good pleasure of his men. He could never get them all together. He referred, with evident jealousy, to the heads of great factories, where the labour, being of a purely mechanical nature, and therefore plentiful, capital could command.

"In these great establishments," he said, "regulations are laid down; the men must come and go at regular hours, or they are turned away; and their places are supplied by others, who are only too glad to fill them."

The master who spoke these opinions had been a workman, and a turbulent one, who had suffered imprisonment. Money had completely changed him. Now he did not see the grievances of which the working classes complained.

I paid a visit to the small warehouse and workshops of M. Renouvin, to see his men at their benches, and watch the development of those exquisite carvings out of the rude blocks of wood, which, for delicacy

and artistic finish, are unrivalled. Any person who desires to test the excellence of Paris wood-carving, should contrast it with the work that is sent forth from Switzerland. In M. Benouvin's warehouse I put two inkstands side by side, one carved in Switzerland, the other in Paris. The difference, on minute examination, was extraordinary. The leaves of Swiss production were flat and formal—the veins being regularly cut, as by machinery; whereas there was play in the French treatment. The lines were all studied; there was an artist's eye in the disposition of every tendril; you expected, when the wind blew, to hear the leaves rustle—while you knew that no sou'wester would bend the stiff lines of the Swiss wood-leaves. Before these you thought of the wood, and not of the leaf.

Between real artistic carving that has value in the connoisseur's esteem, and that which, though artistically conceived, is mechanically executed, there is a wide difference. The carver chooses the wood on which he will employ his artistic power, with great care. The block must be faultless; the grain must be close and sound. Oak, that will realize certain massive designs, is not fine enough in grain, for those minute carvings of fruit and game; and Dutch scenes in which expression must be given to the human face—for the panels of *buffets* and cabinets. Chestnut is finer than oak; but the close and fine grain of the pear-tree is that on which the artistic carver loves to show the minute delicacies of his beautiful art. The thousand-and-one fantastic articles for ornament or use, or both, which the fertile fancy

of the Paris workman creates out of blocks of wood, are nearly all of pear-tree. The designs are for ever changing. The stump of a tree, with weeds gracefully choking it, serves for a tobacco-box. A rough grotto, over which extends a ploughed field, with a plough lying in the unfinished furrow, is a lady's glove-box. A lizard, on whose perfect scales you can almost see the shine, peeps lazily over the edge of a broad leaf—the tray for a lady's jewels! These *objets de luxe* are carved by men who call themselves artists, and who have the pride of artists; and would not work on a wood that could not do them justice. They take pride in the perfect lines of a Renaissance *cave à liqueurs*. I examined some of the larger works, in progress in M. Renouvin's *ateliers*. These were groups of flowers or fruit, and some Dutch scenes cut of solid panels of pear-tree wood. The labour represented in one of these Dutch scenes, thrown into bold relief by the artist's graver, is extraordinary. The faces of the Dutch boors beamed from the panel; the bloom seemed to lie off the groups of flowers; a *gourmet* could not refrain from putting his fork into the game. These are the true works of art on which manufacturers like M. Renouvin and the artists like the men he employs, base their reputation. But, just as there is zinc bronze, there is cheap carving. A great demand has arisen of late years for little *carte de visite* frames in carved wood. They must be produced rapidly and cheaply. M. Renouvin and others, turn them out by the dozen, to the untutored eye most gracefully carved, at about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  francs each. This cheapness is attained by cutting the design through a block of

thin planks, so that by one operation, a dozen frames are produced. The pattern thus cut out, is glued to the solid wood of the frame. All kinds of carved wood articles are produced in this, the cheap manner; the carving being applied almost complete, to the flat panel. To the careless eye the effect produced by the cheap method is as good as that made by the patient labour of the real artistic carver; yet the price of the carving from the solid wood is double that of the design which is, to use the carver's word, *appliqué*. The real artist in wood, then, depends upon the connoisseur. People who love to make a show at the least possible expense will have the less artistic carving, as they will have M. Boy's bronzes. A glove-box that costs 60 francs, when cut solidly from panels, costs only 30 francs when the carving is applied, or glued, to the panels. The first is a work of art; the second is a specimen of manufacturing skill. The degrees of excellence which range between the best Paris manipulator of pear-tree wood, and the shepherd carver of Switzerland, are infinite to the practised eye.

M. Renouvin's *ateliers* (they were very small ones) were close to his warehouse in the Rue Bonaparte. They were workshops, the walls of which were covered with files of designs, and plaster casts of carvings that had been excuted. Carved chairs and *buffets*, in various stages of progress, were lying in all directions, amid the wood chippings. At the various benches the men were busy at their delicate work; with piles of fine and coarse chisels lying before each worker. One man was carving a huge

griffin, driving his chisel into the eyes of the monster with a little mallet. The cunning and the assurance with which, having glanced at the design, he chipped at the wood, keeping every curve perfect, was a fascinating exhibition of skill. Another man, driving his graver gently with the palm of his hand, was cutting a delicate design upon one of the supports of a *buffet*, and near him a boy was learning to carve, by working out a simple design upon an odd bit of wood. That utter disregard of the presence of a visitor, which I had already remarked in other Paris *ateliers*, I again noticed in this. The men did not bestow a glance either on their patron or on myself; and one appeared to indulge in a long and light whistle, obviously intending to convey to us the utter indifference with which he contemplated our arrival. As we approached the second *atelier*, through a court-yard terminating in a pretty garden, a manly voice struck up a lively air in the *atelier*, and continued it as we stood in the doorway. It supported the patron's account of the attitude of the Paris wood-carvers. They appeared determined that there should be no mistake about the independence of their position, before a stranger. This second group of men never turned for one instant, from their work. There was something almost insolent in their indifference. When the patron spoke to one, his question was just shortly and rapidly answered. The men saw that their employer was doing the honours of his establishment to a foreigner, and that he was calling on me to bear in mind all the excellencies of their art; yet not a courteous word, nor sign,

nor explanation, fell from one of them. They held doggedly to their benches. One man "hummed a surly air" nearly all the time we were in the yard. He looked a complete specimen of a quick-witted, fiery, and most turbulent Paris workman. The prodigious mountain of rough, curly black hair, that stood out from his head like that of M. Alexandre Dumas, only in a denser and taller forest; had something audacious in the way in which it was worn. The owner of it seemed to be the master, rather than the man; and a very exacting master to boot. These are the airs which the men assume when the scarcity of their kind of labour enables them to get the upper hand of the capitalist. There was one man in the second *atelier*, who was at work, executing some delicate Gothic traceries on pear-tree panels. He was in a pre-eminently authoritative position; since it is very difficult indeed to find workmen who could execute Gothic ornamentation. This workman may come and go as he lists, and not a word may be said to him. There is always work waiting for him; and he may take it where he chooses. Tired of the Quartier St. Germain, or displeased with the patrons thereof, he can always find employment in the Quartier Popincourt.

The majority of the wood-carvers are paid by the piece. Some, however, are paid by the hour. The most skilful men are generally paid by time. Eighteen sous per hour seems to be the highest pay, and 10 sous the lowest. At the highest rate, therefore, of payment, a wood-carver earns 6s. per diem for a day's work of eight hours; while he who is paid

at the lowest rate, earns 3s. 4d. for the same short day's work. Let the reader bear in mind that this statement of wages is one made to me by a Paris employer. In support of it, he begged me to observe how the earnings which the men made by four or five days' labour, enabled them to spend three or four days of expensive idleness. The best proof that the carvers are not in a miserable condition, is that they will not work six days in the week. Their amusements interfere with their business. They must have their billiards, their cards, and their dance. They must be *en fête*, with the rest of Paris. On Sunday mornings every workman will be at his bench, hard at his work, up to noon; when he will break off, and go forth in holiday attire, to enter upon his long span of leisure. The afternoon of Sunday affords him only a taste of relaxation. St. Monday is his real holiday; and, if it leaves him any money unspent on Tuesday morning, he will not be inclined to return to his bench. He is essentially a spendthrift; and wife and children who are dependent upon him can have but little hope that he will make any provision for the future.

Among the Paris manufacturers of carved furniture, it is the custom to settle the account of each workman's earnings, at the end of every fourth week. The workman, however, is not provident enough to make the earnings of one month keep himself and his family through the next. The experience of Messrs. Alexandre is against even fortnightly payment of wages; since their manager stated that for two or three days after the Saturdays on which the

men were paid, they went vagabondizing about the neighbourhood, and would not return to the factory until their last centime was spent. From the moment of their return to work until their next payment of wages came, they lived on credit; paying, of course, more for every article of household consumption than they would, if they bought with ready money. This being the effect of a fortnightly payment of wages, what would be the effect of a monthly payment? In the first place, the workman would receive a large sum of money in a lump, and his temptation to prolong his *noce* would be doubled. He would probably spend a whole week away from his work. Again, he would require longer credit from his tradespeople: for this credit he must pay interest, and so he would be a loser. The system, however, adopted by the carved-wood manufacturers meets the evils of a monthly settlement which I have indicated. The account of every man's work is taken on every fourth Saturday, it is true; but he is permitted to draw a certain sum on account of his earnings at the end of each week; say 15 francs. On the fourth Saturday he receives the amount he has earned, deducting the advances that have been made to him. Under this arrangement a prudent man would thrive. He would be able to pay cash for daily necessities, and would have an extra sum to receive at the end of the month, that would cover rent, the expense of clothing, etc.; and the subscription to a mutual benefit society. The woodcarvers, however, appear to be a gay, independent, thrifless race, who live from hand to mouth. They

use the power they enjoy over their masters, chiefly to extort almost daily advances of money from them.

"A man in this trade," a patron said to me, "must always have his hands in his pocket. They want money continually. If you don't give it to them, they are off to another workshop. More liberty, indeed! We are their most obedient servants."

This is the account of them I obtain from their employers. I am speaking now of the wood-carvers or sculptors, only. In the manufacture of French furniture there are many distinct classes of workmen. There are, in addition to the carvers, the mirror-makers, the gilders, the marqueteurs, and leather-gilders. Where so many costly materials are, as the French have it, "married," there must be many classifications of work. It is, however, most distinctly stated by employers of wood-carvers that these men are well paid; that, if their earnings are not large, the fault is in the workmen, who prefer pleasure to work.

The cabinet-makers, speaking as a body, assert that they earn only half the wages of English cabinet-makers; and that they do twice as much work as their fortunate British rivals. On the one hand, the men put none of their miseries to their own account; on the other, the masters will not admit that they are in the wrong—that they are at liberty to combine against labour, or that they under-pay. The men declare that the masters grind them to the earth: the masters say—"Behold us, the vassals of

tyrant Labour, who sets away half his week, and returns to our workshops only to earn more money, for more debauchery."

There are wide differences between the condition of the artistic manufacturer of expensive Renaissance furniture, and the poor *trôleur*, who makes, and buys, and sells; and there must be corresponding differences in the condition of the working men who are engaged in the vast furniture trade of Paris. Between Fourdrinier and the furniture vendors of the Rues de l'Echaudé, de Cléry, Saint Nicolas, and Rue Traversière—there is the difference which exists between the man who works for Poole and the man who, under a sweater, works for Messrs. Moses and Sons. M. Renouvin, whose workshops I have described, is a small manufacturer, who produces artistically. He takes pride in the *buffets* and book-cases he turns out. He has the soul of an artist in him. He is not a hand-to-mouth manufacturer. He sends forth his sculptured works to various parts of the world. A great case had just left for England when I entered his warehouse. I accept, then, his workshops as fair examples of what is to be found—not in slop-works, nor where poor men work miserably on their own material; but in an establishment which has a regard for the reputation of Paris wood work abroad. If, in these workshops, the men had cause for complaint, as regards the salary that was paid to them, I can only say that they appeared to be mightily enjoying their wrongs. If it be not true that the wood-carvers of Paris are so few that they can command work winter and sum-

mer, and at a fair price ; the responsibility of the statement I have printed must fall on the shoulders of the patrons who originally made it. But I confess I am inclined to think that many of the trials which the art-workmen, of Paris especially, undergo, are the fruit of their own improvidence. The cabinet-makers point to the superior position and inferior workmanship of their London rivals, and to the handsome sick-allowance which the English cabinet-makers allow their companions. And they call upon the Emperor to permit French workmen to combine, in order that they may provide against sickness and old age. Their patrons assert that the combination would lead to breaches of the public peace. I am anxious only to reach that which is true between Paris masters and men ; and to this end I appeal to both, and state the reasons and facts I get from both, impartially to the reader. I am constrained to admit that I fear the workmen's delegates to the London Exhibition of 1862, have not stated all the truth in regard to the condition of their companions. I enter a bronze factory on a Wednesday afternoon, and still some of the men have not returned from the weekly debauch that is ushered in by St. Monday. I turn to other art-workmen, and among the first questions patrons put to me is,—“ Do English workmen leave their work for days together, like ours ?” Take the case of a wood-carver, who can earn 18 sous, per hour, all the year round. He is a workman so specially skilled that he can command permanent employment. Assuredly he is in a position to provide abundantly for his family, and to

secure an old age of independence, clear of the walls of Bicêtre, of the Incurables Hommes. He might pay his own doctor in sickness. Complete independence is his, if he will work for it. Does he achieve this independence? His employers say "No," and that the reason why he remains a necessitous man to the end of his days is, that he will give too much time and money to his pleasures. Alas! while he is playing his game of billiards with his friend, for their cup of *gloria*, he is burning the candle at both ends. Not only is he neglecting opportunities of making money, but he is spending that which he has earned, and preparing a wretched old age for himself. If these remarks apply to the man who can always command work, they apply with double force to the workman who belongs to an industry in which there is a long dead season. The temptation in this case is greater, unhappily, than with the well-to-do workman. What hope has the poor slopworker, who toils at famine prices, for some gaudy *docks de la toilette*? Independence is an impossible dream to him. The question that absorbs all others with him is, can he continue to keep body and soul together in sufficient strength still to make clothes, in vulgar imitation of Dusautoy, for the would-be genteel? For enjoyment, he gets what he can snatch out of the present; and leaves, as he needs must, the future to take care of the future. Bicêtre for him, and La Salpêtrière for his wife, are appointed places. Let the *fosse commune* claim him while his children are young:—some visitors from the Bureau of Benevolence of his arrondisse-

ment will be directed to his garret, and his orphans will be borne away to be of the number of *enfants assistés*.

The sick workmen, and workmen out of employ, the cabinet-makers state in their report, are a heavy annual charge on the municipal budget and on the State budget. "Give us corporations," they cry, "and let us compel our members to make certain subscriptions to our funds, and we will no longer trouble you. We will support our own sick and aged. Young men between twenty and thirty years of age, are improvident, and will not make savings. They believe they are to be always young. Well, we will make both young and old assure the independence of their old age."

These arguments are addressed, in twenty different forms, to Government: but are the men quite certain that the Imperial Government is anxious to be relieved from the charge of the sick and old of the working classes of Paris? The working men, formed into corporations, and backed by capital the result of compulsory savings, would, I believe, go less to the wine-shop and the billiard table. They are children now, expecting everything to be done for them; they would be men then—guiding their own destinies and those of their children. They would also be a great, independent, and (their patrons say) a turbulent central power; and their influence would be felt in the politics of their country. Is the Emperor anxious to have a vast body of working men—and these the most intelligent in his empire—wholly independent of him? When the artisans assert that, with liberty,

they would want nothing from the Government, I am afraid they assert too much.

The wood-carvers complain bitterly of the pass to which reckless speculators have brought them. They contradict, in many essential points, the assertions of the patrons who employ them. They insist, in the first place, upon their position as artists; and protest with energy against the present system of competition and speculation, because it degrades the sculptor, and lowers the fair recompense of an artist to the starvation wage of a day-labourer. Competition, they say, has led the sculptor to put out all the minor decorations of his work. The vase is done by one hand that can touch vases only; the flowers are handed over to a second workman; and the birds to a third. In the race for cheap and rapid production, subdivisions of art-labour are carried so far that workmen are set apart to perfect themselves in the manipulation of noses, and in the waving of tresses. With this incessant subdivision of labour, there has been incessant reduction of wages. The leading art-workmen have left their country—so the ornamental wood-workers say—in despair; and now labour for English gold. They instance the cases of Joyau, Hugues and Protat, Wilms, Vechte, and Morel.

The reader will remember that the statement of a manufacturer of carved furniture, was to the effect that the ornamental workers in wood had work all the year round, and could earn 6s. per diem if very skilful; and, at the very least, 3s. 4d. per diem, for a day's work of eight hours. The workmen's statement is a flat contradiction of that of the

patron. The men state that the wages they can earn, are insufficient to enable them to live decently and comfortably. They are so ill-paid, they declare, and are therefore obliged to work so many hours; that they cannot possibly snatch time for the study of architecture and perspective—a knowledge of architecture and perspective being absolutely necessary to the perfect ornamental sculptor. Again, they have no opportunity of mastering the human figure. They cannot touch what they call in workshop slang, the *bonhomme*. They lament the servility with which they are compelled to copy the old styles. They say that fancy has become a fault, and originality a crime; while their patrons tell me that the ornamental sculptors of Paris can obtain work at high wages all the year round, and that they are in needy circumstances only because they woo too frequently the pleasures of the *café* and the *estaminet*. The men, having met together, pronounce their trade to be in a sad state of stagnation. They lament the deterioration of the artistic faculty among them, and deem it high time to take measures for the rehabilitation in the world, of art industry. Their great grievance is against the heads of small *ateliers*, who take work from great firms at low prices, and obtain profit on it, by grinding down their fellow-workmen. A cunning ornamental sculptor gets money enough to plant himself in a small outhouse with a few tools, obtains work, and gathers about him poor men whose necessities force them to work for him at a low price. He makes a profit, then, by his own work--and by theirs.

The ornamental sculptors say that the first method which should be adopted for the resuscitation of their trade, is the establishment of one or more associations that would work against the masters, who now undersell one another by continually reducing the wages of their workmen. This association, or model of an association, would be based on a principle of centralization—a principle which the workmen, turning their eyes on certain great Paris establishments, warmly admire. The association would work on a constitution that would have the happiness of all for its object. Its directors would be elected by universal suffrage. Every member of it must find his position improved, because it would give to him all the profit of his labour. The profits that now fall into the hands of unprincipled middle-men, would be carried into the pocket of the art-workman. The sound administration of such an association, the men believe, would do away with that long dead season which now keeps seven-eighths of the ornamental sculptors of Paris idle, during six months in every twelve. The workmen distinctly, and in a body, state that they have not more than six months' full work in the year. The reader remembers a patron's statement. The workmen go further, and assert that certain middlemen create a scarcity of work, in order to make the workmen accept lower wages. The association which the ornamental sculptors propose would, they believe, destroy that harmful subdivision of work which they now lament, and would enable the working artist to become proficient in all the details of his art.

In addition to this association, the working sculptors desire the establishment of a practical school, to include a museum and library; and to be attended by professors who would lecture to the pupils on ornamental arts. Here young workmen would be enabled, for a small annual payment, to study practically—architecture, perspective, light and shade, etc. The library would contain the best works on every kind of ornament and design. The museum would be filled with the best models of various styles and periods. The working sculptors hold that such an institution is necessary, because the existing public libraries of Paris, although rich in works that would be useful to them, are unapproachable by reason of their complicated organization. All the time a working sculptor has to spare, is spent in endeavouring to find the book he requires. Again, the ornamental sculptors say that they have never seen one of their body copying in a public museum; nor do they believe he would be permitted the privilege—if he sought it. These workmen offer their opinion on the evening classes established for Paris workmen. An apprentice, fortunate enough to have a considerate master, who will afford him fair leisure time; may repair to the schools established by the city of Paris, and have his lessons in drawing and modelling. But the professors who teach in these schools are not ornamental draughtsmen, nor modellers. They simply teach the young workmen to copy from a few models supplied by the city, which are always in the classic style—a style which the pupil never sees in his master's workshop. His

apprenticeship finished, he generally abandons even this insufficient school; and when he is presently convinced that he has not knowledge sufficient to become a first-rate working artist, he is ashamed to return to school. It is at this most dangerous period of the working man's career, that the proposed institute would be useful. He would have within easy reach, a rich collection of the best works on ornamental art, by which he might form his taste.

The men then approach the question of wages. They demand a fixed minimum rate of pay for average workmen, and to be paid by the day or hour. They ask themselves, and very naturally, how it is English working sculptors have succeeded in fixing the minimum of their day's work at 7s. They desire, moreover, the establishment of places like the English workmen's house of call. Such places would do away with the necessity under which the Paris workman is placed, of running from *atelier* to *atelier*, in search of a job. He might devote the time he now loses in the streets, to improving studies, at his institute. So far is the statement of the patrons from the truth when they declare the number of working sculptors insufficient for the work to be done, according to the workmen, that there is reason to call for a great reduction in the number of apprentices taken by masters. Many masters have only apprentices at work. They convert these boys into little machines, and teach each one how to fashion some little ornament. Their apprenticeship finished, they are imperfectly educated workmen, and swell the ranks of the miserable men, who, being but mode-

rately skilled, are compelled to accept any wages that are offered to them.

The representative working sculptors suggest that a permanent commission should be created for the regulation of a tariff of wages, and for the direction of all matters directly appertaining to the interests of the trade. This commission would take care of the institute, regulate the number of the apprentices, and determine, at the end of every apprenticeship, whether the master had done his duty by the boy who had been confided to him. These are some of the means which the working sculptors of Paris, who are now, according to their own account, in a miserable condition, would have adopted—by authority—for the regeneration of their art, and of themselves. They are now, they tell us, hewers of wood, under the thumb of greedy speculators, and they desire to become once more educated and independent artists. At the present moment their worst enemies appear to be taken from among themselves. It is the workman in his little shop, who beats down the wages of his fellow-workman.

## CHAPTER VII.

How French Workmen rise—Lerolle's Bronze Workshops—The System of Bronze Manufacture—The Monument for the Heart of Prince Napoleon's Mother—French Workmen in England—The Pompeian Style—The Greek and Egyptian Styles—The Princess Louis of Hesse's Mirror—The Rise of the Lerolles—The Pope's State Railway Carriage—Lyons Shawl-weavers—Barbedienne's Workshops—Great and Small Workshops—The Workman Director—Castings for the Mausoleum of the late Prince Consort at Frogmore—Enamelling Shops—Collas' Reductions; the System said to be the Invention of Louis XVI.—A Small Workshop—The Industrial Associations of Paris.

THERE are most romantic stories to be told of the great workshops of Paris. In London, men command the offices they once swept. The carrier's ruddy boy makes his way from the delivery of errands, to the government of banks. Her Majesty lays the sword of knighthood upon the shoulder of Adam, the gardener. In Paris, brilliant fortunes are also made; and the Cross of the Legion of Honour is worn at this moment by many men who wore the blouse of labour in their youth. There is a marked difference in the *moyen de parvenir* of the English and French workman. The English youth, destined to make a large fortune by his own exertions, is, as a rule, only a very hard-headed, self-willed, temperate, and persevering fellow; who catches at every passing straw; who loses no opportunity. A down-right worker, with a strong taste for money; an

errand-boy, who peeps keenly through the office railings, and watches how his master's profitable business is transacted; a clerk, who masters every detail of the machinery in which he is an humble cog-wheel; or a shrewd originator, who invents a profitable new subdivision of a great industry—these are English types of commercial success. Paris successes are, in the main, differently composed. Nearly all the chiefs of great workshops are the sons or grand sons of working men. Superior skill and knowledge, artistic power, mechanical aptitude, are the levers here, or have been. In the vast art-manufacturing districts of Paris, we find the men who have achieved notable successes, are distinguished pupils of distinguished artists. Superior art, exquisite taste, ingenious harmonious combinations of materials, are the foundations on which the Paris workman builds the edifice of his fortune. Thousands of masters, who employ only six or eight men, are content to spend their lives working hard, as mere workmen in chief, and to retire with a fortune at which a second-rate London tradesman would sneer.

This wide difference between Paris and London commercial success, is one, undoubtedly, that stands to the advantage of the Paris working classes. It is the art that is the valuable quality in most Paris manufacturers. The materials which the art-manufacturers of Paris use are not cheaper on the banks of the Seine than they are on the banks of the Thames; consequently raw material does not give the Paris manufacturer any advantage over the London manufacturer. The Frenchman has a plentiful

supply of artistic skill, whereas the Englishman is compelled to import his at a high price. When I was in the manufactory of MM. Lerolle the other day, and was looking over the artists' *atelier*, one of the principals pointed to some exquisitely delicate mouldings of, I think, Louis *XV*'s time, and said —“ We keep these here to guide and inspire our workmen.”

I could see how strong the sense of art was in every part of the establishment. In this, the artists' *atelier*, every kind of noble precedent in art abounded. There was nothing of the mere money-making shop about it. The artist seemed, as Tennyson would have him, “ to rest in art.” At his elbow was a library, stored with all the choicer gems of the great art-workers of old and of modern times. He could base himself only on the purest model. This library was there to guide his taste, and to inspire his inventive faculties. Round about were classic models in infinite variety. Gossamer traceries, curves at once exquisite and bold, daring and happy combinations of styles, and courageous, artistic eccentricities, were under his eye. “ This,” my guide said to me, pointing round the *atelier*, “ is the beginning of all.”

He knew and rejoiced in the art that ruled his domain. Designs and studies in every stage were lying about; and when I entered, an artist was hard at work over his broad sheet of paper, designing some of the exquisite enamel work, for which the Lerolles are famous, and of which they had perhaps the most perfect modern specimen, in the Palais de l'Industrie last year.

Their workshops in the Chaussée des Minimes, near which art-manufactories abound, are extensive, and are remarkable for the extraordinary variety of castings that have been made and collected in them during the last forty-three years. The castings fill four or five warehouses, and are arranged in hundreds of wooden compartments that reach to the ceiling, against every wall.\* They are all classed, so that any required ornamentation or joint, or pedestal, or figure, can be found in a few minutes. They were the *disjecta membra* of triumphs in bronze art-manufactures; parts of *chef-d'œuvres* that are spread all over the world.

Beyond the castings were the dusty plaster moulds, on which two or three workmen were gaily working, whistling as they manipulated the mild head of Peace, or added a fair fold to the garment of one of the Graces.

There was a shop in which the castings were received, and whence they were given out to be chased, or beaten, into faithful copies of the artist's design. This art-workmanship is not performed in the *ateliers*—which are, strictly speaking, little more than warehouses. The system under which MM. Lerolle produce their art-works is the one generally adopted. They rough-cast their designs, and then distribute them through the agency of their *contremaîtres*, or overseers, to skilled workmen, who do their work at home. These home workmen usually employ three or four men; they are, in fact, small manufacturers working for a great firm. The *contremaîtres* are responsible to the firm, for the work they

distribute, and for its proper execution. These home workmen, who can afford to employ two or three hands to help them, are the real art-workmen of Paris. They return the rough-castings perfected for mounting, the mounting being done on MM. Lerolle's premises. The *atelier* in which the mounting, or putting together, is done is the largest in MM. Lerolle's premises. It is also the noisiest. The filing, hammering, and scraping are somewhat trying to the nerves of the visitor. I saw lamps, candelabra, tazzas, clocks, and statues in various stages of progress. But the most prominent object in the *atelier* was the highly ornamented basement of the monument in bronze; that is to be placed over the heart of Prince Napoleon's mother. A skilful workman was perfecting all the more delicate lines of the design; tapping on the solid brass before him, sharply and daintily as a woodpecker. The plaster model of the design for the monument, lay in a dark corner of the shop. And on a bench not far off were lying, purple from the fire, the rough castings of the great cushion and the imperial crown, that were to complete the monument. None of the workmen ever paused at their work as we went through the shops. In the mounting department they appeared to be thoroughly absorbed by the niceties of their delicate labour. There was indeed an exquisite pleasure in seeing the perfect parts (some infinitely small) adjusted with mathematical precision, to the perfect whole. There was not room for a particle of dust to lie between the fittings. It seemed as though any of these workmen could

detect a deflection from the perpendicular caused by a thread of spider's silk. Their work would bear inspection under a microscope. It is finished to be judged by artists and great connoisseurs. It is to be paid for by princely purses. These bronze-workers complain that princely purses are being turned from the encouragement of high art manufactures to that of horse-facing; and that the lack of native patrons is gradually driving the renowned art-workers in metal—the Vechtes, the Morel-Ladeuils, Huberts, Maleskis, Sauves, and Godons—into the pay of British manufacturers. These Paris bronze-workers found British cases in the Exhibition filled with their works. The Coalbrookdale Company, Messrs. Elkington, and others, owe their chief artistic renown to the great Paris art-workmen whom they are able to hire. The Coalbrookdale Company exhibited a great candelabrum, supported by life-size infant figures. The Paris bronze-workers' delegates asked the Company's attendant in the Exhibition, whether the candelabrum were of English design. The reply was in the affirmative. The delegates turned on their heels with contempt, having recognised in this English design, the work of their countryman, Carier. In the studios of Baron Marochetti the same delegates found that all the workmen were French. Everywhere, in short, they saw their most skilled brethren working for British pay, and selling their genius to make laurels for the wealthy manufacturers of perfidious Albion. These bronze-workers have, one and all, the spirit of artists, and have a strong desire to

see all the triumphs they can achieve, put to the credit of their own country. They cannot but see the great superiority they enjoy over their English rivals. The proof of this superiority is, that foreign countries tempt them by high wages, to leave Paris. We have no English art-workmen who can compete with these intelligent and highly-cultivated *contremaîtres* and finishers, who are perfecting exquisite works in Lerolle's *ateliers*. Yet our inferior workers earn 25 per cent. more than their Paris superiors. This is the result of an inquiry made in London by the Paris workmen themselves.

MM. Lerolle employ about 200 workmen, all of whom, being employed on precious materials, on clocks for royal boudoirs, and on mirrors meant to reflect queenly faces, are in the highest degree skilled. Opposite their workshops are their great show-rooms. We have but to step across a narrow yard, to see the rough discoloured castings of the foundry brought to their perfect state. A walk round these rooms gives the visitor a fair idea of the great resources of Paris artists and art-workmen. Here are designs the most ambitious, and prettinesses the most trivial; monumental statuary, and artistic invention and finish shown upon a paper-knife. It is easy to perceive at once, that the artist's library of classic models is not left to moulder on the shelves. The Paris bronze-workers complain that their art is kept too closely to ancient models. They would turn for inspiration, from Greek mythology to the living present. Already there are symptoms of the decline of Apollo, and Bacchus, and Hercules, and Phœbus, before the

rising star of modern heroism and renown. The dominant work in Lerolle's collection is a monumental bronze of broad and rich design. It is as highly finished as watchwork. Nothing could exceed the grace of the draperies. The centre piece is designed to illustrate the art of the 16th century. Benvenuto Cellini and Bernard de Palissy, Michael Angelo and Jean Goujon are representatives of the fine arts under Leo x. and Francis i. The two candelabra which accompany this magnificent centre-piece of bronze and black marble, are two candelabra supported by the Three Graces of Pilon. The Paris designers delight in doing honour to the great names of modern times. They very happily combine antique ornamentation with modern illustration. Their designs are extravagant at times; but never, by any accident, tasteless. That which surprises the foreign visitor to an establishment like Lerolle's is not that there are artists with the plentiful power that is here exhibited, but that, in the little work shops that crowd round about this quarter, there are hundreds of workmen whose sense of art is hardly inferior to that of the original designer. Here is a richly enamelled inkstand the size of an ordinary dessert-plate. It is a most elegant design. The centre medallion, richly coloured, represents the massive head of Michael Angelo; and round about are representative figures of architecture, sculpture, and painting—the three arts that gained by his genius. The design is rich and varied, and full of feeling: the execution is masterly also; the work, probably, of humble hands that will never earn

more than skilled mechanic's wages—for art-workmen are plentiful in Paris. That which is to be remarked and admired in the most insignificant detail, as well as, in the most prominent outline, is the conscientious finish with which all the work is turned out. Prince Napoleon's resolve to have a complete Pompeian villa in the Champs Elysées has brought Pompeian bronzes into vogue. MM. Lerolle have a large collection. Pompeian lamps, and stands, and clocks are here in great variety. They are all modelled after a severe study of Pompeian antiquities, and there is not the smallest work among them, that is not minutely true to the original. A Pompeian lamp was decided upon after a careful study to serve as a model for all the lamps in the villa. Algeria has brought another style into fashion. I noticed one remarkable piece in this style. It was a clock, by Cordier, with Moorish decorations, surmounted by an Algerian musician, with dancing-girls for supports. Near it were some cups in the same style, in which the pale Algerian onyx had been used with exquisite effect. From Algeria, Paris artists have wandered to Egypt, and have taken the entrance to Egyptian temples as designs for clocks. One of these designs, surmounted with a bronze of Sesostris, was bought in 1862 by the Prince of Wales. Fashion appears to be running decidedly to the East. MM. Lerolle's collection includes some remarkable bronze heads of negroes and negresses, and other artistic whims of the passing hour, all noticeable, however, for the exquisite art-workmanship expended upon them. There were many

reproductions from the antique — the Venus de Milo, of course. Restorations from the Parthenon, Hercules destroying the serpent, or standing as the crown of a richly-enamelled clock ; busts of great and little great Frenchmen, fantastic candelabra, a hundred graceful combinations of marble, malachite, glass, and bronze, encompassed us round about. The Three Graces, the Hours, the Seasons, gods and demi-gods, and pagan monsters, were in abundance, and turned artistically to many uses—here to support a cup for the Emperor, and there to light Prince Napoleon to bed. Most attention, however, appears to be paid just now to Greek and Egyptian designs, some of which are exceedingly beautiful. Two tazzas in the latter style were bought as models, for the authorities of the South Kensington Museum. The time and patience given to some of these works, especially to the enamels, are surprising. A table in enamel, by MM. Lerolle, cost three years' labour to execute it. It is only after examining closely the infinite and perfect detail of the ornamentation round, the Greek and other mirrors enamelled on silver frames, or by lifting an enamelled cup no higher than the finger, and marking the ivy crawling round its base ; that a visitor to Paris art-workshops can form even a faint idea of the skill and knowledge represented in a collection of bronze and other metal works. Even the rooms in which these models are kept are complete works of art ; one being built like an Egyptian interior, and another decorated, completely in Louis the Thirteenth style. An ornament for a lady's dressing-table, represents

many months of patient industry, done by a cultivated mechanic, who is as proud of his power as the most renowned sculptor, and who lightens his drudgery by dubbing himself artist. The mirror, enamelled in silver, which was bought by the Princess Louis of Hesse out of Lerolle's collection, looked a trifle at a distance, but proved on inspection to be a noble monument of intelligent and educated labour.

I repeat, that that with which Paris manufacturers keep their place in the markets of the world, is not superior cheapness of material, nor advantage of situation. They reign by the superiority of their art. Take the Lerolles, for instance. The founder of the house was a man who acquired his reputation for artistic bronzes, by the skill with which he executed a series of works from drawings by Palaggi, president of the Milan Academy, destined for the Racconicci Palace, at Turin. The original Lerolle, with a wisdom usually shown by Paris manufacturers, brought his son up as an art-workman. These art-workmen, become masters of art-manufactories, are men of exquisite taste and ripe judgment. They make the artist supreme in their *ateliers*, and their works become studies for the connoisseur, and not merely furniture for the millionaire. Their reputation spreads far and wide, and this reputation commands the market in distant places. They are called to decorate foreign palaces. M. Lerolle was selected to decorate the Pope's state railway-carriage; to provide palace bronze decorations at Naples, Caserta, and Brussels. Since many of the

industries of Paris are admirable for their artistic excellences, it follows that the Paris workmen are almost the first to feel the least diminution of national prosperity. The workmen earn their bread by producing forms of beauty to gladden the eyes of the rich. Bronzes are bought by the prosperous, and by the prosperous only. In times of distress they remain unbought, like many other Paris manufactures. The thousands of working men whose skill and taste impart elegance to homes all the world over, find themselves put aside. In no manufacturing city, so much as in Paris, therefore, does it behove the working classes, and all who approach them, to have a care for the future, and to be prudent in prosperity. I find that in the year 1848, the group of industries, which included every kind of art-furniture, paper-hangings, bronzes, and cabinet-work, suffered among the most unfortunate. This group, which, according to the Paris Chamber of Commerce, includes thirty-two divisions, and produced to the value of £5,485,809, 17s. in 1847, did not produce to the value of £1,500,000 in 1848—the year of the Revolution. The gilders, the arm-chair and billiard manufacturers, and the workers in bronze, were the severest sufferers of this group. They found their earnings reduced 75 per cent. People would not buy gilt frames while furniture was being thrown out of windows.

Men's minds were not quiet enough for billiards nor to allow them *siestas* in arm-chairs; and they could most undoubtedly dispense for the present, with a new bronze of the *Venus de Milo*. It is

curious to see how everybody's expenditure was confined to that which was strictly necessary. While the bronze-workers starved, the gasfitters, lamp-makers, and bedstead-makers contrived to live ; because lamps, gasfittings, and bedsteads are necessities.

The important group to which I am now referring, and which may be called the makers of domestic furniture of all kinds, whether plain or artistic, inhabit the great Quartier St. Antoine, and round about the Place Royale. The group consists of nearly 27,000 workmen, and rather more than 6000 employers, great and small. The majority of these employers are skilful mechanics (like those who receive rough castings from Lerolle's) who have four or five workmen under them. The relative importance of this group of industries may be estimated by the annual earnings of each trade. The bronze-manufacturers are at the head of the list ; then follow in succession, the cabinet-makers, the carpet-manufacturers, the paper-stainers, the lamp-manufacturers, the arm-chair makers, the looking-glass manufacturers, the gilders, the carvers, the gasfitters, and the bedstead-makers. All the artistic labour comprised in this group, belongs to the power of artistic production which has made the industry of Paris world-famous. At the head of this group stand the bronze-workers, beyond the competition of every foreign rival. They allow that English bronzes are next to theirs for their artistic excellence, but then the finest bronzes produced in England are the handiwork of Frenchmen, and cost more than double

their value in Paris. The French bronze-manufacturer, if he were not artistically superior to the English manufacturer, would still command the market, being able to sell at half the price necessary to his English rival. The position, then, of the Paris manufacturer is doubly secured.

The inquirer naturally hopes to find among a population engaged in the production of works of art, like the Paris bronzes, a steady prosperity, and comforts beyond those enjoyed by ordinary working men. The reader will perceive the different circumstances under which harmoniums and bronzes are produced. In the one case the manufacturer comes in direct contact with all his men; he knows how they live, and what they are paid; he sees that they are properly lodged; he encompasses them with protection against sickness. On the other hand, the great bronze-manufacturer deals through his overseers with a number of small manufacturers, who each employ a few men. These are the two distinct and rival systems of manufacture in Paris. Much has been said, and remains to be said, in favour of both systems. The employers of a few hands, who are only skilled mechanics themselves, are men to whom the position of a small employer is a rise in life;—the reward of steadiness and perseverance. I find that there are 6000 employers in the group of industries with which I am dealing. Thus the profits of this group are more widely spread than they would be under the *grands ateliers* system. The question that interests us is, which system is the more advantageous to the mass of the working men?

Sudden news from Lyons shows that the small employer of labour, such as the shawl-weaver, does not always lie on a bed of roses. The Lyons shawl-weavers have all left work; and a weaver writes a most argumentative and temperate letter to *La Presse*, on the continual decrease of wages. The calculation of a shawl-weaver's earnings, who owns his own loom, shows that after he has paid his *lanceur* and other expenses, 300 days of labour bring him a net profit of £24, 7s. 6d. In the first place, the shawl-weaver cannot secure 300 days' labour in the year; and, in the second place, how can he support wife and children on these earnings? There is no hope for him, however, while the law remains as it is, giving the right of meeting to masters, and refusing it to men. The Imperial Government is now offering a notable concession to French working men, in order to relieve them from the state of bondage in which a most unjust penal law had long kept them. This law has pressed with particular severity on operatives who work in very small workshops. Each small employer of labour has to compete with many rivals, undoubtedly; it is his interest—his business to get work from the great manufactory at the highest possible price, and to pay for the work he superintends, at the lowest possible price. In industries where little skill is required, and where crowds of famished work-folk are crying for labour, this small employer is what the London poor call the sweater. It is not so easy, however, to apply the sweating system to a trade in which good workmanship is the

last result of long experience. An average worker in bronze is not made in a day---nor in a year. The first neighbour who falls into distress cannot step into the bronze labour-market, and undersell his brother. The value of each variety of ornamental work becomes established by common consent ; and the superior workman, who employs his fellow-workmen, cannot be a very unkind master, nor a very unjust one.

I was directed to the great workshops of the famous firm of Barbedienne, in order that I might see the manner in which the firm produce the incomparable works that have placed them in the proud position they occupy as the decorators of the chambers of kings and emperors. The interminable series of workshops were freely thrown open to me. I may say of them generally, that they are well lighted, well ventilated, and not overcrowded. They are not regular ranges of buildings built on a pre-conceived general plan. Some eleven years ago an intelligent and courageous workman pitched his workshop on this site, and began his modest art work in metal, with the help of one workman and an apprentice. That workman is now the director and sole comptroller of a hive of 350 men. As he walks about the long ranges of workshops he must be a daily example to the men who are casting, or modelling, or chasing at their benches. There is a radical difference between a great workshop like this, and the small *ateliers* of M. Renouvin. In the small *ateliers* the men are freer. They come and go, sing, and receive their friends. In

the great workshop the workmen come and go to the sound of a great bell. They have regularly appointed hours for meals, and must return when the bell rings them back; or be shut out. In a great establishment like this such order is indispensable for the proper progress of the important works in hand. It is also undoubtedly advantageous for the workmen. It gives them regular habits, so that they earn more money than they would if left to their own wayward will. Again, they are not at the mercy of "sweaters." They are associated on equal terms with a great number of their fellow-workmen. They belong to the Factory Mutual Benefit Society, which provides for them in sickness.

The director of M. Barbedienne's workshop came forward, and himself volunteered to conduct me through his domain. He will permit me to remark this of him, that he who eleven years ago was only an *ouvrier* with a man and an apprentice, and who had watched this vast establishment grow over his head, showed himself true to his origin. He was habited, like any of the 350 men under him, in the blouse of labour. In the courtyard huge blocks of marble were lying, and in a corner workmen were sawing blocks into small squares. These were the rough materials for splendid clock pedestals. On the right of the yard was the foundry--a broad, solid place, with a high glazed roof. The interior had a strikingly picturesque appearance, as I entered it. At long, low stone tables stretching across the building, like sittings across a chapel, dozens of men were

at work preparing moulds for bronze castings. The sections and broken parts of moulds lying about, and the dozens of men labouring at the thousand details that go to make a good cast ; the mounds of black and yellow sand heaped against the wall ; and at the end, the furnaces spitting livid flames through their chinks, with men carrying white hot jars full of metal as liquid as water in every direction ; made a picture that would have gladdened many an artist's eye. It requires a long training before a man is able to make a perfect mould out of the Fontenay sand that lies against the walls. Weeks and months are spent in the perfection of one of these sand moulds. After all this time and labour spent, the mould can be used only once ; and when the liquid metal is poured into it, if it have the least defect, all the labour and time are lost ; the mould must be broken to pieces. The workman who explained to me all the mysteries of this foundry, was one of those intelligent and thoughtful artisans who are an honour to their class. He was at work on a small piece of metal, the ornamentation of which required mathematical precision in the flow of its lines. It was to be a most complicated piece of rich enamel work. At his side, in a little bag, was some of the rich dark Fontenay sand, and ever and anon, as he made some infinitesimal addition to his work, he tested its accuracy by taking an impression of it with a pinch of the sand. He accompanied me round the foundry, and showed me what the various workmen were about. Before one lay the section of a mould for a cast of the Three Graces ; a most complicated piece of work-

manship, with a number of tortuous channels pierced in various parts of it, through which the metal was to be poured. He explained where the cast must be sundered—where the lines or angles were complicated, in order to make the metal reach every little crevice. At a table near where the Three Graces were lying a man was painting a mould with a light cinder-wash, in order to preserve its sharpness and delicacy. Hard by a man was mixing in just proportions, the new yellow Fontenay sand with the black, the black being that which had already served. He said—“We mix the new sand with the old. The sand is too precious to be used only once, and we find, indeed, that the mixture of the old with the new is a good combination. The sand is to be found only at Fontenay aux Roses. To it we attribute much of the excellence of our French castings. Other sands have too much silex in them, and this has exactly the proportion necessary for our work.”

We then turned to the furnaces, where the metal was boiling, bright and dazzling as the sun, in porous jars. Every now and then a long bright-red jar was drawn out of the furnace by a powerful pair of forceps, the metal in it having been weighed to a nicety, so as to fill exactly the mould for which it was destined. When the mould was rather a large one, a powerful fellow wielded the forceps, and, lifting the great jar of liquid metal, poured it out so dexterously, that not a drop was spilt. And then, through the little apertures left in the sand, the gas escaped in flames of exquisite colour. My guide accompanied all the processes of casting, with a running commen-

tary, that showed how completely he had mastered the science of his business. I found afterwards that he was a workman so conspicuous among his fellows, that they had elected him to be a *Prud'homme*, or judge between master and man.

From the foundry I proceeded, under the escort of the director, to the various workshops. They were in a long high building, each floor being devoted to a distinct branch of bronze manufacture or of enamelling. In one shop some fifty men were engaged mounting and perfecting the various parts of statues, or clock-cases, or vases; or polishing or putting together the branches of candelabra. In the mounting shop were spread many stacks of large bronze castings of a highly ornamental description; and at the end of the shop a man was working up the rich wreaths that ornamented the capital of a great bronze column.

"As you are an Englishman," said the director, "you ought to know something about this great work we have in hand. This capital is part of the tomb of the late Prince Consort, at Frogmore. We have at present many men there at work upon it. It will be a most splendid and costly affair. The designs for all this work in bronze have been made by our own artist in our *atelier* on the Boulevards. It is a description of work that could not be performed, with this finish and elegance, in England. There is a peculiar excellence about French bronze castings which has never been reached by any other nation."

This national work, which has been given to M.

Barbedienne, he regards as one of the rewards he has obtained for the sacrifices he made in order to show the high degree of excellence which Paris workers in bronze have reached. In his show-rooms under the workshops, are all the great chandeliers he exhibited in Captain Fowkes's Palace. He did not find a customer for one of them in England, although they are rare examples of fine taste, and of artistic finish in the execution. In the mounting-room were other costly works in progress. There were two colossal Sèvres vases, which the Emperor had sent to receive highly-ornamented bronze stands. There were flower-boxes, exquisitely enamelled; Algerian onyx cups, receiving feet and handles of great price. There were candelabra and other articles, imitated from the Chinese, for the Palace of Fontainebleau.

In the workshops above, the men were chasing and working up the rough casts; and on the third floor, were the rooms in which all the delicate processes of enamelling on glass and on metal, were going forward. At one table, a man holding a globe before him with one hand, was painting a design as delicate as the richest lace, upon it, with a white paint that was presently to be burnt into, and incorporated with, the glass—by the heat of the furnace at hand. There were women clearing the edges of enamels after their first subjection to the fire. The enamelling on metal, for which Barbedienne's house is celebrated, is a most wearying process; demanding both great skill and much patience. In the enamelling shops, by the side of Barbedienne's enamels, were some specimens by the Chinese. Nothing could sur-

pass the beauty of the latter. The workmanship was perfect ; but the Chinese process is three or four times as expensive as that of the French. The French cut the patterns into the metal ; whereas the Chinese fasten the pattern on the flat metal surface—just as in the production of cheap carved furniture the design is glued to the panel, instead of being cut out of it. In a second room a number of men were seated at a table—in shape like a lady's silk-winder—with rows of pots filled with bright, thick colour ranged round them. They were filling in the patterns carved in the metal. Some were panels for jewel-cases ; others were crosses. Enamelled crosses appear to be made by thousands at M. Barbedienne's. They were lying in baskets against the wall in the warehouse. In a third room was a great furnace, before which a man, as well dressed as a banker's clerk, was standing, holding a flat shovel with a very long handle. With this he very daintily deposited jars, with enamels in them, in the white heat of the furnace. This is the *perilous* part of the enamelling process. By a slip of the hand he may destroy the work of many days. In the chasing shop we passed a workman who had a small vase before him, which he was preparing for the enameller. He had already spent forty days on it. It was impossible not to admire the patient industry of this artist, who could only reach his result after so many hours of fatiguing attention. The labour of the man near him, who was finishing up a cast of Clessinger's Fawn, seemed positive play by comparison.

In the basement of the building was a cool and

very roomy cellar. This was the marble-cutting shop, where marbles of various kinds were being wrought into ornamental shapes, to be adjusted with the bronze fittings upstairs. One man had a block of Algerian onyx, which he was turning into a cup. This onyx has come much in vogue of late. The supply of it is a monopoly enjoyed by one little company. To show how the value of it has increased with the demand, I may state that, whereas it cost only £32 the cubic metre when first used for ornamental purposes, it now fetches more than £160 the cubic metre. In this marble workshop, as in the shop where the metal-turners are at work, the lathes are set in motion by hand-wheels, or by the feet. One old man, who was working a gigantic wheel that turned an immense model for a porphyry column, looked very sorrowful and out of place at this monotonous brute labour, that could bring him, probably, only the lowest scale of wages. I was glad to hear that all these lathes are shortly to be worked by steam. Perhaps the most interesting department of the works is that where statues and busts, and, indeed, all kinds of ornamental works, are produced by Collas's happy adaptation of the principle of the lever. By this lever exact reductions can be made, the degree of reduction being regulated by the fulcrum of the lever. In this shop stood an immense cast of Alexandre Dumas, whose *amour propre* may possibly be wounded should it come to his knowledge that a Paris firm has had the audacity to reduce him. A malicious gentleman inquired whether the Collas system could be applied to the versatile Frenchman's

works. One word about Collas, the inventor. He was an artist workman of high repute. His invention proved to be a most valuable one, and went far towards establishing the fame of M. Barbedienne. On rows of shelves in one of the warehouses are statues that look like family portraits. There is the big parent statue, with a promising family of various sizes, and all the very image of the great original. By Collas's system not a line, not a *nuance*, can be lost in the reduction. So valuable, in short, was his system, or rather, the system which he brought into the market, that he became M. Barbedienne's partner. The system which bears Collas's name was indeed practised and invented by Louis XVI. I believe there is the instrument with which the royal locksmith reproduced medals, in the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers. It is even said that Sir Isaac Newton made something like this application of the lever. To that most useful institution of Arts and Trades, however, Collas no doubt owed the idea of the system which now bears his name.

I went direct from Barbedienne's workshops to one of those little workmen's *ateliers* of which so many thousands exist in Paris. It was a small shop in a courtyard, in which not more than four or five men could possibly work. I went thither with a guide who is well known among the Paris working classes, who is president of one or two of their associations, and who still remains faithful to his class—a working man. I had a long conversation with him by the way, on the rival systems of great and small workshops. I happened to mention to him the name

of the patron who had said to me that if the working men were permitted to form themselves into corporations he would at once give up business. My companion stared with astonishment—

“ What ! he said so ? He said he would give up business if the Government gave working men liberty to meet ? *Par exemple*, that is a little too strong. Why, sir, I have known him since my childhood. We were workmen together at Lyons. There he was the foremost among the agitators of the most advanced doctrines. He was a socialist, to the marrow of his bones. He was imprisoned for his socialist opinions. I should have thought that no change of fortune would alter him. He made a fortunate marriage, that gave him money enough to set up in business for himself. But I thoroughly believed that he would never part company with the working classes. And so he would throw up business if we had liberty ! *C'est ignoble.*”

I must confess that I was not much surprised at this account of the workman become master ; and as we walked along, talking about the fate of the working men’s associations that were established in 1848, I could not help pointing out to my companion the fact that a large proportion of the evils under which the working men of Paris now suffer, are due to the rapacity and want of conscience in their own class. He had only just described to me how the 1848 associations had dwindled into firms of from five to twenty members ; who had thrown aside altogether the principle of association, had usurped the position of patrons, and had become hard taskmasters

of their fellow-workmen. According to my informant, some five-and-twenty of the old associations now exist in this degraded form. The members, who have all the profits, work, as a rule, among the men they employ. But this is the only difference between them and patrons, who have never pretended to form associations for the profit of the working classes.

"It is this principle of association, sir, alone, that can save us. Directly a man can get a little money together to buy tools or raw material he takes orders from great houses, from speculators at a low price, and is then compelled, in order to make a profit, to pull down the wages of the fellow-workman whom he employs. This is the case all over Paris, and while workmen cannot combine to arrest the spread of the evil, the condition of the working classes must become worse and worse every year."

When I asked whether the workmen within his knowledge were a saving class, he answered, "Saving with a vast majority of them is an impossibility. Nothing is put by for old age. They must have patronage even to reach the Hospice at last." As he said this we turned into the little workshop.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A Little Workshop—Working Men's Corporations—Imprisonment of Two Thousand Carpenters—The Tanners—Paris Tanners at Bermondsey—An Unfortunate Event—Garnier Page's Forty-five Centimes—The Street-Lamp Manufactory—Lamps for the Moscow Theatres—How the Gas-fitters are Checked—Brass-workers' Sick Fund—Paper Funerals—The Carpenters—Their Varieties.

THE little workshop in which we found ourselves had for head, a workman who had been three or four years at Birmingham, in the employment of Messrs. Elkington and Co. His was a little bronze shop, in which piece-work was done. The man himself was engaged working up a large group of pheasants, old and young, that was to be sent off the next day to some English peer. He was one of those thoughtful men, taking to the business of life with real earnestness, who always become leaders among their fellows. Just as the intelligent guide in M. Barbedienne's foundry had become a *Prud'homme*, and, I believe, the secretary or treasurer of his corporation; so the man before me, a burly, broad-shouldered fellow, had been selected to expound the aspirations of his fellow-craftsmen.

The old system of *compagnonage*, with all its ludicrous forms and privileges, appears to be rapidly passing away from the working classes of France.

Workmen are almost afraid to admit, among their fellow-men, that they belong to the old craft, and hold by its customs. Where *compagnonage* exists, its old tyranny is still rampant, and the apprentice can, in some trades, neither eat nor sleep with the master. The former must show particular deference in his intercourse with the latter.

"It was an intolerable 'state of bondage,'" said a working man to me. "It led to all kinds of abuses — to fights, and even to murders, on the high road. The line was severely drawn between the journeyman and the apprentice. The corporations of recent times have changed the state of affairs. Their constitution is more in accordance with the times in which we live. The reader will find this subject treated at length in Book III.

According to my informant, working men occasionally meet in large numbers, and hold high-festival. I found one conspicuous artisan, who had presided over a banquet of 300 of his fellow-men on the 15th of August 1863. He referred to a banquet of 800 that had taken place in 1862. He talked freely of the Carpenters' Corporation, the Bronze-workers' Corporation, and others. He said that working men, tramping the country in search of work, if they belonged to the representative corporation of their trade, found themselves immediately among friends on arriving in any town. If no work was to be had, means were given them to pass on to another place, just as English working men are helped by their craft when journeying from point to point, in search of a job. To keep all this organization in

action, meetings, and important ones, are indispensable; and meetings take place accordingly. For example, the Prud'homme at M. Barbedienne's was compelled to delay some written information he had promised me, because as an officer he was bound to attend an important meeting of his corporation. The president of one of the corporations explained. It is true that the working men hold their meetings for the government of their corporations, but not before they have given notice at the Prefecture of Police, in order that an agent from the prefecture may attend each meeting and report it to his superiors. These corporations cannot therefore take into their consideration the question of wages, nor of trade customs, nor of influences that tend to decrease the value of labour. They can impose no conditions on the individual for the benefit of the mass. They can fix neither minimum nor maximum of wages. They cannot protect their craft against the *marchandage* system which appears to be eating into the heart of every trade. These corporations, in short, now about thirty years old, are little more than peculiar mutual benefit societies that give help to their members when out of work, or when afflicted with any sudden misfortune. It being unlawful for working men to agree among one another for a simultaneous and collective demand for an increase of wages, or any other advantage; and the corporation meetings taking place under the vigilant eye of a police agent, it is clear that the action of the corporations must be restricted to that of a sick fund and benefit society. These corporations, in short, are simply unauthorized mutual benefit

societies, each society representing a trade. There are more than 300 of these unacknowledged associations in Paris alone. The men prefer them, as a rule, to the regularly constituted societies that have received the authorization of the Government, because in these authorized societies there is too much high patronage overlooking the workmen's savings. Many of these societies, indeed most of them, are in the hands of large employers of labour, who are themselves the patrons and presidents of them. The men in their employ cannot choose but subscribe their centime in every franc, or whatever the proportion may be; and they get their franc and a half or two francs a day when they fall into the sick list. But they feel no interest whatever in the society. Their interest is reserved for their corporation, although its business is conducted under the eye of the police. The Government appears to exercise its extraordinary powers with leniency. But these extraordinary powers exist, and may be used strictly at any moment. In March of 1862 the city of Paris issued a tariff of carpenters' wages. In this tariff the day's work of a journeyman carpenter was fixed at six francs. Nearly all the employers refused at once to pay this rate of wages. The consequence was that the men simultaneously left work. This was a transgression of the penal law, and the police made a descent on the men who had left work, followed them into their homes, pulled them out of their beds, and in a few days had put 2000 of them under lock and key in the prefecture. It is true that they were soon set at liberty, probably under a direct order from the

Emperor, but it is also true that they were not illegally incarcerated. A French official in a high position under Government, endeavoured recently to convince a president of one of the working men's corporations, that the English law did not allow working men to combine for the regulation of the price of their labour; and this man had been somewhat comforted, I think, by the idea that, after all, the Paris workmen had pretty well as much liberty as the London workmen. When I explained the state of the English law to this man, showing him that only intimidation, or a breach of the peace, could subject an English workman to the attentions of a policeman; and that, indeed, the English working classes did, as a rule, regulate the tariff of their labour in common, he became very excited, and begged me to give him the text of the English law on the subject.

Some classes of the Paris working men appear to be more courageous than others. The tanners, for example, who live on the banks of the yellow Bièvre, appear to have managed a general understanding which secures them something like a uniform rate of wages. These men are certainly among the least educated or refined of the Paris workmen. Three or four of their number went to London in 1862 to examine the specimens of leather-dressing included in the Great Exhibition. They returned to Paris, I am sorry to say, highly incensed against the working tanners of London. It appears that when the Paris deputation of tanners repaired to Bermondsey, to visit the London yards, they were examining some

of the tan-pits, when one of their number, who was nearly seventy years of age, fell into one of the tanks. He was dragged out, after having disappeared in this filthy bath, by two English workmen, who were close at hand. His companions were stupefied with horror at the sight the old man presented; but the two men who had rescued him were not in the least disconcerted. They knew that the Frenchmen before them were Paris representatives of their own trade, come to them on a friendly mission; but, uninfluenced by the character of their visitors, or by the disaster that had happened to an old man of seventy years of age, they walked up to the chief of the party, and demanded money for the rescue they had effected. The Frenchmen were disgusted, and well they might be. A small sum was given, but it did not satisfy the rapacity of the two English tanners. The master of the establishment, who had joined the group, when told of the undignified conduct of his men, merely replied that the sum given was not as much as they usually expected on such an occasion. A little brandy was fetched to revive the poor old man, who was really in a lamentable plight. The unmerciful master would not allow the Frenchmen to pay for the restorative, but his men crowded about the French workmen, each man saying that he had fetched the brandy, and begging for something for his trouble. Their importunity was intense enough to draw 7s. or 8s. from their French brethren who had come to pay them a visit. The man who related this incident to me, and who was one of the French party, added that it was impossible to

exaggerate the bad effect this incident had had on the Paris tanners. It was impossible to explain it away to them by saying that they had accidentally fallen among bad specimens of English workmen. Unfortunately the yard in which the accident happened was the first which the French deputation visited. It was the last. They returned directly to their quarters; and when they reached Paris, brought a story with them the bad effect of which will not be easily obliterated. I could not therefore expect a very cordial reception on the banks of the Bièvre. Such an incident creates a strong prejudice that is not easily reasoned away among men like the Paris tanners. It has an effect just like that of M. Garnier Page's 45 centimes of disastrous memory. The working men of France will not forget those 45 centimes added to the *impôts* by the Finance Minister of the Provisional Government. It was in vain he explained that every additional centime was necessary, in order to avoid a national bankruptcy. He remains the man who added 45 per cent. to the *impôts*, and they will remember him. They do him a great injustice. It is said that even now his chances of election would be almost *nil* where working men had the preponderating voice. The incident in the tanner's yard will for years to come influence Paris workmen's estimate of the London working man.

In the workshops of Vaudoré, Bonnard, and Bizot, situated in the Rue Mazarine, behind the Institute, I had an opportunity of seeing works in brass and bronze carried on, on an important scale. In these workshops, a great proportion of the ornamental

street-lamps of Paris are made, as well as the gas-fittings of the Tuilleries, the Louvre, the Luxembourg, the Elysée, the Institute, the Hotel de Ville, and the various Ministerial residences, to say nothing of the hospitals, barracks, and markets. Works of this importance, carried on under contract, could not be performed unless the utmost regularity were exacted from the men. I found them one morning, about half-past ten o'clock, busy at their lathes ; in a well-arranged brass-foundry, lighted from above. At one end of it was a small steam-engine, that gave motive power to all the lathes ; and near it was suspended a copy of the Ministerial regulations to be observed in workshops where steam is employed. In a conspicuous part of the foundry were the regulations of the firm for the government of their men. These regulations enforced the men's punctual attendance on pain of dismissal, or having their piece-work handed over to another workman at their own expense. The workshop was remarkable for the order in which every part of it was kept. Street-lamps, chandeliers, and gasfittings of all kinds were ranged in perfect order in their appointed places. In one corner were stacked hundreds of old street-lamps, that had been exchanged for new. The expense to which the city of Paris goes for ornamental street-lamps, is astonishing. In the first place, they are mostly, if not all, in bronze, and where they are destined to light a fashionable resort, they are highly ornamented with the arms of the city, or with the imperial crown. The lamps, for instance, for the Avenue de l'Impératrice, cost £12 each. The models of

the lamps for the church of Ste. Clotilde, and for the Halles, were almost as elaborate as that for the avenue. Lamps travel far and wide from this workshop behind the Institute. When I was there, it was in full work upon fittings for portable gas for the two new theatres at Moscow. In the warehouse were gas candelabra that had been executed for the Queen of Spain. The head of the house was at the moment of my visit in Russia; and depended upon the regularity of the work done in the Rue Mazarine to carry out his engagements with the Czar. So that a set of workmen whose regular attendance could not be relied on, would put M. Vaudore's affairs into hopeless disorder. He is compelled, therefore, to be strict. When at eleven o'clock the steam-engine gave out a whistle, shrill enough to be heard in the inmost recesses of the Institute, all the wheels stood suddenly still. Each man dropped his work, and made for the water-trough near the door, to perform a mild ablution before breakfast. In a few minutes the noisy workshop had become a silent solitude.

The hours of work in this establishment are from seven in the morning to seven in the evening, with an hour (from eleven till twelve) for breakfast. The day's work, therefore, is eleven hours, and from noon until seven o'clock the work proceeds without a break. The gate is strictly kept, as I had an opportunity of observing. At noon exactly, the engine sent forth its shrill voice, and at once set all the wheels above the lathes in motion. The men poured through the gate into the shop. There seemed to be no laggards. A few minutes after twelve, the engine

again screamed, and the gatekeeper, with a peremptory look, closed the gate. All who had not come in, would have to wait outside an hour, and lose all that time. Men who absented themselves for the rest of the day, would have to give a satisfactory explanation of their absence, or suffer the punishment prescribed by the regulations. Workmen who arrive after the second whistle of the engine in the morning, are also shut out from the workshop for an hour. A check equally strict is kept on the gas-fitters who work out of doors ; that is, fixing lamps or lamp-posts in the streets, or chandeliers in public establishments and theatres, or private houses. These men, and there are sometimes 150 of them at work in different parts of the capital, carry with them a little red paper or ticket. This ticket is filled up with the hour of their arrival, and the number of hours' work they have performed, and is signed by the person in authority, in the place where their work has been done. The men whose labour is in the streets, are under inspectors. Regularity in the men is indispensable for the fulfilment of the firm's business. It is advantageous also to the men themselves. Their earnings appear to average from 5 francs to 7 francs a day. At piece-work in the shop, they can realize from 8 francs to 15 francs per diem, according to their skill and energy. If the workers by the hour were regularly employed all the working days of the year, they would be among the most prosperous of the Paris working classes. But with the brass-casters and turners, this is far from being the case. Sometimes the engine does not begin work till Wednesday

morning. At other times the firm are anxious to keep the men employed even on Sunday and Monday. The men, it will be seen, are expected to show great devotion to their employers, when there is a stress of work; and to be content to lie idle, like the steam-engine, when work does not press. I am inclined to think very often, that if it were necessary to supply an engine with coals when it was at rest, as well as when it was at work, means would be found of keeping it regularly employed. The coals come out of the pocket of the employer, and food comes out of the pocket of the working man. The wages of a working man, therefore, are no test of his position, unless the number of working days he can command in the year, are taken into consideration. Now, these workers in brass can hardly reckon upon five days' work per week, all the year round. Let us grant, however, that they do secure five days' work per week, at an average of 6 francs per diem. This would give them 24s. a week as their regular wages. There is no doubt, however, that their actual earnings are under this figure, even in the establishment of M. Vaudoré.

One centime in the franc is the percentage deducted from their wages, for the firm's sick fund. This deduction would amount to about 3d. per head per week. For this forced subscription, every sick workman is entitled to one franc and a half daily, or ten francs and a half a week; a sum that cannot possibly keep the wolf from his door, if he be a married man with a family of small children. When a workman dies while in the employ of the firm, 40

frances or 50 francs are sometimes voted, at the suggestion of his old companions, for his funeral, or for his widow. Most of the workmen with whom I have talked state that it is hardly possible for the majority of Paris working men to do more than this for the benefit of their families. The statistics of Paris funerals show the condition in which more than half the population die. The average number of deaths per annum is 41,000. Of this number more than 26,000, or 64 per cent., are buried gratuitously, the Department of the Seine paying to the Pompes Funèbres 6 francs per funeral.

It was on a wet and gusty day that I accompanied a workman who had obtained permission from an overseer of the works to show me over one of those great timber yards, where carpentering of all kinds for great and little buildings is carried on on an extensive scale, and where machinery plays an important part. The yard was situated about half a mile to the west of the Invalides. Its whereabouts is marked by a tall chimney. The yard was well filled with timber kept under cover; and beyond I could see long iron sheds and shops that appeared to be constructed in the latest and lightest fashion. Unfortunately the foreman to whom we were recommended, was absent. We entered the office of the clerk of the works. In the absence of the foreman he would not permit us even to see a circular saw at work. Nobody could go into the works, he said, without a special order. We had come a long way in a high wind and pelting rain; the object of our visit was explained; and we showed that the right

to visit the establishment had been conceded to us. But all to no purpose. The clerk was as firm as a rock. If we had made an application to spend a private half hour with the crown jewels, we could not have been met with greater firmness.

The carpenter's art is divided into many special and distinct branches. But the two broad distinctions are the *menuisier*, or maker of small objects, and the *charpentier* who constructs large timber works, as scaffolding, etc. Without going back to Roubo to discuss when the *menuisiers* call themselves *huchers*, or *huissiers*; or touching upon such great carpenters as Master Phillipot Viard, of Rouen, or Jehan Russin of Amiens, I may observe that Paris workers in wood have been for a very long time divided into two corporations; and, first, of the *menuisiers*.

There are the house-carpenters and those who build up artistic objects in massive wood; and there are the cabinet-makers who construct furniture in French or foreign woods. The first section of the *menuisiers* is divided into—1. House-carpenters and artistic carpenters; 2. Makers of carriages; 3. Makers of arm-chairs; 4. Mechanical carpenters or modellers; and, 5. Makers of antique furniture. These are the broad divisions; but the development of the trade has been so rapid of late that other branches have sprung up—as staircase-makers, the venetian blind-makers, etc. It cannot, however, be said that the carpenter's trade is in Paris in a very healthy condition. This trade is one that has felt the evils of the *marchandise* system acutely. It is the work-

ing men themselves who are pulling down their own trade. This sweating system has increased, I am told, under the influence of the great workshops which have of late years arisen in Paris. The system was abolished in 1848 ; but some time afterwards some employers addressed a petition to the National Assembly, in which they declared that it was for the benefit of the trade that the sweater existed. The workman, become sweater, was on the high road to a good position as patron. Nothing was said, however, of the effect of this sweating system on the dupes, or victims ; that is to say, on the working men generally. The sweater becomes rich by impoverishing his fellow-workmen. We cannot be surprised, therefore, that when the Paris carpenters are asked to set forth their grievances, they describe the sweater as an iniquitous individual, who makes his fortune by reducing the wages of his fellow-workmen. He drives human machines. He obtains contract work at a low price from a great firm ; and with these machines that are in his power, he performs it to his own profit, but to their ruin. No wonder, then, that the work is often badly done, and that the *Prud'hommes* are incessantly occupied in settling disputes between the sweater and his dupes. The sweater, in the first place, seeks out the bad workmen and ill-taught apprentices, who, not being able to command an independent position through their skill, he can enslave through their necessities ; and so a large class of unskilful, under-paid, and miserable workmen, is produced.

The manner in which Paris carpenters are paid is

also very trying and very disadvantageous to them. It is the custom of their employers to pay once a month—that is to say, on the first Saturday after the expiration of a month. Some masters reserve to themselves the right of holding a drawback from the workman's salary. In the great workshops a certain sum of the workman's wages is always kept back. When the month finishes on a Monday, the days intervening between it and the following Saturday are reserved for the settlement of the following month; and on this plan wages are reserved from month to month, until the end of the year. In short, the working carpenter is compelled to give credit for his labour, even when this is underpaid; on the other hand, he is forced to pay his rent in advance. The payment of a London carpenter's day's work is two-fifths more than that of the Paris carpenter. The Paris workman's board and lodging are at least as dear as these necessities are in London. The Paris workman is moreover compelled to provide himself with a large quantity of expensive tools. The Paris workman looks at his London brethren and says—

“ These English workmen work less than we do, and are better paid. One workman does not enter into competition with his fellow-workmen by taking lower wages. Between English workmen and their employers, there exists a spirit of freedom and harmony. In the corporation or union of London carpenters three mutual benefit societies exist, which secure each member half the rate of his wages when he is out of work, and a shilling a day when he is beyond work. Why should not Paris workmen have

the right so to bind themselves together that they might secure one another against the hardships of those frequent dead seasons which are ever recurring?"

The *charpentiers* cry aloud that their work is diminishing, and that their numbers are still increasing. In building operations iron is everywhere replacing wood. Happily, say the *charpentiers*, the staircases still remain to them. Staircases and scaffoldings are now the main works on which they find employment. They complain that the tariff established by the municipality of Paris is not always paid to them, or that it is begrimed; and they unite with the other trades in demanding the liberty necessary to enable them to help themselves. These are the statements, it should be observed, of the working carpenters themselves, which I have gathered outside the workshop, that is so jealously guarded. I have no doubt that the story which I should obtain from the patrons would not exactly coincide with that of the workmen. This fact, however, is already manifest to me—namely, that the carpenters of Paris make no provision for their old age, and that they have their share of the 26,000 gratuitous funerals which the Paris authorities are compelled to provide every year.

## CHAPTER IX.

A Busy Quarter—Perfect Packing—Turnspit Factory—Imitation Bronzes—  
Saint Monday—A Renaissance Petticoat—Vaccination for Revolutions—  
The Arms of Peace and the Soldiers of Industry.

THE workshops of M. Boy are not more than five minutes' walk from the establishment of M. Lerolle. In the midst of the most important bronze and other metal workshops of the capital, the Faubourg du Temple, and round about the ancient Place Royale, is a lively, active, intelligent population. The people are prosperous, and their prosperity is shown by the well-filled fruiterers' shops, the piles of fowls ready for the knife and fork at the *rôtisseurs'*, the grocers' picturesque windows, and the snug restaurants that have a jolly, Rabelaisian look about them. The workmen are lounging, and, alas! drinking, round about, at the beginning of the week, by the dozen. The shoeblacks and messengers convert the frame on which they carry burdens into a sofa, and lie upon it in the sun, reading *Le Petit Journal*. The enormous pumpkins repose by the pyramids of prepared spinach. The oil and olive jars stand before the shops, as they are arranged in the burlesque of the "Forty Thieves." The Parisians are exquisitely neat packers. Their artistic eye delights in a neat parcel.

I have often watched the shopwomen who preside over the *bonne-bouches* of Felix's succulent establishment, packing cakes as frail as spiders' webs. They make parcels as light as a balloon, with loops of dainty string, by which the purchaser can sling the perfect pastry on his little finger. Heavy and light goods are all packed in this careful manner. Round about the Rue St. Louis, the shops of packing-case makers abound. The cases turned out, are models of lightness and neatness. A Paris carpenter would undertake to pack a water bubble!

The Rue St. Louis appears to be devoted to bronze-manufacturers, mechanicians, locksmiths, cheap furniture-vendors, wine-sellers, and other purveyors to the inner man. There are a few great establishments in it, like Izar's steel-yard. I was attracted, on my way to M. Boy's establishment, by a rotary machine in a mechanician's window. Two or three lively workmen were in the shop. The *spécialité* was the manufacture of turnspits and revolving heads for hairdressers. In the shop window was a ridiculous plaster figure (evidently intended to misrepresent John Bull), turning perpetually in an awkwardly-bowing attitude. The Paris workman delights in a sly bit of humour of this description. There is a mournful appearance about most London work-folk ; whereas, the hardest worked and poorest paid *ouvriers* and *ouvrières* maintain a cheerfulness it is difficult to understand. I see them passing me in all directions, carrying home piece-work. Men and women loaded with the framework of chairs, or strings of cloth caps, or slabs of prepared

leather; or some heavy piece of upholstery in a hand-barrow, trip lightly past. Fate may be hitting them hard, but they come up smiling to take their punishment.

It was on a Monday that I paid my first visit to the establishment of M. Boy. This manufacturer has achieved a high reputation as a producer of imitation bronzes. He figured conspicuously in the 1863 Exhibition of Fine Arts applied to industry; and it must be conceded to him at once, that his false bronzes are artistically modelled and finished. Men who are the sworn foes of sham, who hate false jewellery, false collars, and false hair; and who incessantly condemn the present as an age of veneer, are hardly prepared to condemn cheap—that is, imitation—bronzes. Bronzes are works of art; admirable for their design and execution. That which is good and humanizing in them is the genius and skill of the artist. If, then, the form that delights the eye may be cheaply moulded in zinc, and by the electro process coppered, and finally coated with bronze; why should we refuse the opportunity hereby afforded us, of placing the “thing of beauty” within the reach of the million? There is no cheating in the imitation; at least, there is none intended. Vulgar people who wish to pass as richer than they are, may take advantage of M. Boy’s cheap copies of fine models, to cheat the world into the belief that they have given an immense order to Lerolle, or Barbedienne, or Lévy; but because the family of the Shabby-genteels is a large one, are we to condemn the articles to which they attach a falsehood?

Zinc bronzes are what plaster is to marble. Let us, then, by all means, bring as much art as may be, to the cheap zinc; for the zinc Venus, the zinc Molière will find their way into the houses of the trading and working classes.

Crowds of people of all classes flocked to the Palais de l'Industrie to admire Barye's long list of admirable works. They might well be proud of him. The 122 works he exhibited showed him to be the master who had a right to the first place in Paris as a modeller. Barbedienne has reduced Michael Angelo's Moses; Matifat is on the traces of Vechte; Rossigneux has revived the art of Pompeii; Salmson's Dévideuse is already bronzed by Linton and Levrat; Clodion's famous Faun is splendid in bronze! Are all these works to be the luxury of the few, when they can be exactly copied at a cheap rate, and so, placed within the means of thousands? The reader will call to mind Wordsworth's noble sonnet on the Italian image-boy, who bore about the country his plaster casts of the good and great "blind old Milton," and others.

M. Boy has taken up the cause of the zinc-bronze manufacturers. Naked zinc can never be a popular metal for art castings. It is cold and harsh in tint. It is true that a zinc cast must lose a little of the sharpness of its lines by the bronze covering, but, the loss is almost undiscoverable when the entire work is left in artistic hands, as the workshops of M. Boy bear witness. His collection is a lesson to all who have condemned zinc bronzes, since it shows how much beauty may be carried into the homes of

thousands, by the use of the cheaper metal. M. Boy goes to work like an artist. His helpers are known men, like Poitevin, Carrier, Salmson, Piat, etc. I am told that he is able to pay high prices for the designs he orders. Zinc is not used then, to spread bad art abroad. When I entered M. Boy's workshop in the Rue St. Louis, it was late on Monday afternoon. The attendant at once said to me, " You have come on a bad day. There is nothing to show you. There are not more than two or three men at work. It is Monday." I had forgotten "St. Monday." I glanced from the upper storey, or gallery, into the spacious shop below. There were the idle benches. Arms and legs, and headless trunks, and scraps of clocks and candelabra, were lying in blue-gray heaps; but only three or four men were busy at their stalls. I walked along the gallery, among the zinc and bronze warriors and heroes, who were packed in rows, to the right and left. There was no work going on. The circular brush was still, the fires of the solderers were out. I peeped through a window into the casting-room. It was like the interior of a honeycomb, but a very dusty and dirty one. In the cells, from ceiling to floor, were the brass moulds in which the zinc is cast. Round about, stacks of legs, arms, heads, cloaks—all sorted, to be carried down to the solderer to be soldered together, when Monsieur the solderer has quite finished his *noce* at the wine-shop; and has arrived at a mathematical certainty that he has not one centime left in his pocket. I asked what the men earned.

" They earn high wages," was the reply. " Some

of them can make as much as 10 francs a day—these, of course, are the very skilful men."

My anxiety, however, remembering the report made recently by the workmen in bronze themselves, was to ascertain the average earnings in this establishment. I was told it was seven francs per diem. M. Boy has as many as 150 men in his employ, in the brisk season, so that his average of earnings may be accepted as a fair one. The gentleman who showed me over the works continued : " This is the brisk season, but they will not come to work every day. They earn enough in three or four days to provide them with the means of amusing themselves for the rest of the week. Some return to work on Tuesdays, some on Wednesdays, and some on Thursdays."

My first visit to M. Boy's was, as I have observed, on a Monday. I returned on the following Wednesday. Even then the men had not all resumed work. On the following morning, however, I had a complete view of them. About ten in the morning the great workshop was full. I was handed into the custody of the overseer, who volunteered to do the honours of his realm. He was a most intelligent, orderly, quiet man. He had every detail at his fingers' end ; he wasted no time ; he showed me exactly enough to afford me a complete idea of the labours of the shop. From the lingots of zinc to the perfect statue, I traced the process of manufacture. There were castings of little warriors for clock-supports, that were moulded with a single spoonful of liquid metal ; and there was the cast of a Renaissance

petticoat that consumed 500lb. of liquid metal! The men were all very busy. In the casting-room three stalwart fellows stood between a massive bench and a great fire. On the bench lay the brass moulds. They were casting bits of statuettes with extraordinary rapidity, turning every minute to the fire, for a fresh spoonful of liquid zinc. It was hot work, and the zinc splashed ominously about; but most unconcerned, active, and lively, in the midst of the hot castings, was a magpie. He was the workman's favourite, and was quite at home, and able to take care of himself.

In the main workshop the solderers (it being Thursday, they had set to work again) were before their fires, giving heads and limbs to the bright zinc cavaliers, or fantastic demons, who lay in their laps. Farther on, a man was mixing a sparkling green paste, destined to give to some light candelabra the *vert antique* that is in vogue. Everything is fashionable in its turn, and it is now the turn of rust! I peeped into the drying oven. It looked like a battle-field. Cavaliers on their backs; mailed arms and legs—lying about in confusion—were drying, in order to be ready for the hands of the workman, who would make them perfect imitation bronzes. Glancing along the workmen's benches, I could see all kinds of figures and statues in every stage of progress. While one man was smoothing the back of a bearded warrior, another was carefully rubbing the nose of a lawyer—a design by Lemaire. These long drawn out, fantastic figures, lean as King Death, are very popular throughout France. The coco mer-

chant and the Zouave, in this somewhat grim style, are especially to the taste of our volatile neighbours.

The system under which the imitation bronze workers perform their labour is, that of the great workshops. The men are all under one roof; and it will easily be seen that this congregation of workmen is necessary. M. Boy could not turn out the cheap articles he sends into the market, under any other system. The various processes must be brought together. Each man keeps to his special business. The old man at the little fire, who has a zinc arm in his hand, will remain at the fire fixing on arms all day long. The Monsieur who is flourishing the instrument covered with green paint, will live by his *vert antique*. Each man acquires a marvellous rapidity of execution in this subdivision of labour, but it is the rapidity of a machine. We must come to admire him as a good invention. The workmen, however, appear alive to the benefit which the cheap imitation of bronze confers on the community.

Imitation bronze, they say, has been vehemently condemned, but they had always faith in its success. They knew it must become an important industry; and experience has confirmed their judgment. Infinite trouble is taken in the chasing and gilding of every description of zinc ornaments. It has given an impetus to the clock and other trades; it has diffused good taste, since its forms are as pure as those of real bronze. It has put beautiful designs within the reach of men of moderate means.

If it be asked whether these workmen who are well housed in this light and airy workshop, are con-

tent, and whether they are a saving race, the answers cannot be very satisfactory. Their trade is liable to long periods of depression. We may blame those men who, earning high wages, decline to work three days in every seven; but can we reasonably maintain that every man in M. Boy's workshop is able to earn seven francs per diem? If this be strictly true, then there must be almost culpable exaggeration in the report made by the deputation of bronze-workers who were sent to London in 1862. The imitation bronze-worker must be better paid than M. Lerolle's home worker. And here is a triumph for the *grand atelier* system. The subdivision of labour, in this instance, tends to raise the workman's wages! I must freely own to a difficulty I find in the way of the truth. On the one hand I am told that the men's wages are high; that they are so high, indeed, that the men will not labour more than four days out of the seven; on the other hand the men bewail their lot, and complain that they are slaves in the hands of oppressive masters. They have the intelligence, moreover, to explain exactly what they want.

If certain social economists, they say, regard revolution as a periodical malady, we are bold enough to affirm that a kind of vaccination may be applied to stay it. Let men in power endeavour to understand and to give, what the people are right in demanding. Let them allow us to meet like rational human creatures. There appears to be an idea abroad that, with liberty to meet, we should at once fall into dangerous political discussions. There could not be

a greater mistake. The men who live by labour have been now, for some time, agreed on one point, viz., that street revolutions have never settled the questions in dispute between employer and employed, and that it is the working man who suffers most severely from them, since they deprive him of work. We want to be on equal terms with capital. We desire to consult together on our common interests. People are justly astonished to see in a country like France that, while dramatic authors, musicians, lawyers, and stockbrokers are permitted to assemble and deliberate, other professions are forbidden the privilege.

We ask more liberty, and for this reason. Is a nation happier with a few men possessing enormous fortunes, or with many moderate fortunes? We own to a predilection in favour of many small fortunes; because small fortunes are less despotic than great ones, and liberty has better play. At a distribution of prizes, made by M. Rouland to an evening school, he said, as Minister of Public Instruction—referring to the Universal Exhibition of 1862—"Arise, soldiers of industry—arise, and go to work in that glorious war that burns more coal than powder, that costs no shedding of blood; and which substitutes for the routine of tariffs and prohibitions, the security of forethought, invention, and taste. Defend, with the arms of peace, the genius of France, as you defended her flag with the musket; and remember this rallying word, 'Labour and Intelligence!'"

The chasers, and bronze-casters and workers, are quite agreed with the Minister as to the importance

of protecting the genius of France with the arms of peace. But how can they use their arms when their hands are tied together? Industrial progress, they say, is very difficult without liberty. France has entered upon a free-trade era, and her Minister exhorts the working classes to bend all their energies towards the duty of keeping her genius at the head of civilisation. The bronze-workers have boldly taken the challenge up. They have printed their answer. With consummate tact they bid the Government bear in mind that France enjoys few privileges in the industrial world on account of cheap raw material. Paris is supported almost entirely by its taste. Taste is not a thing to be kept in stores, like bales of flax or cotton. Taste lives in the heads of intelligent working men. Taste must stand in the stead of the old custom-houses. It isn't the zinc M. Boy's workman is pouring into a brass mould, that is the valuable thing in the mould. The brass receptacle is of small value. But that which is precious is the design.\* The model finished, that which will be valuable about it will be the graceful lines, the majestic pose, created by the artist; and the skilful working upon the rough cast, of the accomplished labourer. M. Rouland wishes to see the soldiers of industry protecting the genius of France. The soldiers answer that the workman's intelligence and skill, and the artist's creative faculty, together represent the genius; not the metal and the paint, which the capital supplies to labour, and which are to be had in all countries.

It was impossible, in short, not to see at every turn

I made among the Paris workmen that they were in a most discontented state.

They feel that they suffer under a great injustice. They have had enough of revolutions in the street; and they are alive to the folly of them. The bronze-workers shrewdly remark that it is never the working man who profits by a popular outbreak, while it is he who is the immediate and severest sufferer. I think it is admitted now, by nearly all men who mix with the working population, or know something of them, that they are not in the least degree disposed to meddle with political questions. They would probably form many wild associations—and some of a most fantastic character—but they would not wander beyond the discussion of their own pecuniary interests. Be it always borne in mind that they suffered horribly in 1848 and 1849, and that they prefer an abundant and nutritious diet, to the most Republican *régime*. If M. Boy's men could discuss their grievances in the shop, and arrange to demand certain fair concessions, as one man; I believe they would proceed peaceably, and that not a scratch would appear on one of the thousands of figures that lie about.

## CHAPTER X.

The Banks of Saint Martin's Canal—The Popincourt District—The Wall Papers of Paris—A Paper-Printing Mill—A Paper-Weight for Napoleon the Third's Life of Cesar—The Poor Little Boys—The Printed List of Patterns—The Tour of France—French Working Men's Debts, and the Law of Debtor and Creditor.

I SHOULD strongly advise any visitor to Paris, who may wish to have a peep at the real work-a-day world of this show city, to be driven to the banks of St. Martin's Canal. The broad ways that lie on either side of it, are flanked by factories, workshops, and yards of great importance. On the canal lie ponderous barges or ships, of peculiar construction, that bring vast quantities of raw material to be used in the establishments that are round about. It has a picturesqueness that is peculiar to it, with its floating charcoal stores, and the high Chinese bridges that span it. From its banks the pedestrian reaches the Popincourt district easily, or dips into the Boulevard du Prince Eugène, through ways blocked with building operations of every description; and stopped at every corner with the long waggons, upon prodigious wheels, in which the great white blocks of stone are carried. The population bustling about this busy scene, wear blouse and cap. Broken down

workmen and workwomen flit past incessantly; there is a brisk sale of cheap food on all sides; there are *bonillon* houses, merchants of the four seasons, and humble *restaurants*, with inviting fruit in the windows. The gutters are red or blue, or yellow streams, coloured from the lofty works of the paper-stainers. Jets of steam, or eddies of hot water, proclaim the active presence of the great power against which manual labour has contended in vain. We are in the midst of the important colony of men who send forth the renowned wall-papers of Paris to every part of Europe. The workmen are an acute and independent race; not to be browbeaten by little authorities, nor to be quietly trampled under foot by employers. The reader may remember that in an early chapter I touched upon the system on which the working paper-stainers' wages are regulated. Patterns are put before them at the beginning of every season by the masters; and masters and men come to a distinct understanding as to the price that shall be paid for each pattern. This price once agreed upon, both masters and men must adhere to it strictly. The men are bold, and have an *esprit de corps* which braves prison bars when the masters are unreasonable. But they are not themselves much to be praised for generosity towards the unhappy little creatures who are dependent on them.

The paper-printing establishment which I visited is situated in the heart of the district almost exclusively devoted to this industry. It is a high oblong building, very like a small cotton-mill. In

deed, the road and the buildings in the neighbourhood give a British appearance to this part of Paris. M. Bailleux de Marisy, writing on the recent annexation of the outlying communes to the capital, remarks that the great workshops and mills which have arisen of late years in the vicinity of Paris have given to certain Parisian districts, an appearance closely resembling an English manufacturing centre. The gate is hardly closed behind the visitor to one of these mills of British exterior, before he is completely reassured that he is in France. The order maintained in the French establishment is not less complete than that of an English mill, only there is an ease in the regularity of the former which does not reign in the latter. Clerks, and overseers, and workmen are on freer terms. They address one another gently. Their arrangements are ingenious and neat. Everything has its place.

The warehouse of the mill was on the ground floor, and stretched the entire length of the building. It was filled with *rouleaux* of various lengths — of papers printed for every variety of human habitation. Here were the cheap endless machine-printed papers destined to decorate the walls of hundreds of *mansardes*; and here again were the golden and crimson rolls to be unfolded in the richest salons of the West End. There were bright little flower-patterns for the walls of the grisette; and hand-printed bouquets, every petal of which was a work of care, to please the eye of the countess; works of art, and machine-work!

I was in the mill of manufacturers of the first

rank ; but their business is not an extraordinarily extensive one ; yet in their warehouse there are half a million of rouleaux of wall-papers, some of them being 830 metres long. Their English machine can throw off 830 metres of paper in 25 minutes. The produce of the establishment averages 1700 rouleaux of paper per diem. The cheapness of these exquisitely printed patterns is extraordinary. One beautifully executed flower-pattern was shown me. "That," said the overseer, "costs 12 sous (or 6d.) for eight metres." This is the result of machinery. Even the hand-machines can turn out 1000 metres of paper daily, when the pattern is of one colour. The cost of the most elaborate and artistic patterns, that require thirteen printings, is low. One printing puts a bird on a branch ; a second deposits a butterfly on a leaf ; and so a bower grows to brighten the breakfast-room of a princess. There is not a shade on the butterfly's wing that has not been discussed by employer and employed. The wall-paper printer will not

"Add a crimson to the gay macaw,"

unless he is paid for it to his satisfaction. The changes — the whims of Parisian art-manufacture

find the workman ready to profit by them. No new industry, no new adaptation of a material, no introduction of a strange substance, finds him at a loss. The sudden introduction of Algerian onyx is a case in point. It is a most difficult substance to work ; yet at the onyx works in the Popincourt district I saw some forty or fifty men turning cups,

sawing slabs, polishing blocks, and chipping ornaments out of this brilliant gray marble—all at work as though Algerian onyx had been half a century in vogue. Steam-saws were cutting enormous blocks for chimney-pieces; steam turned the lathes, at which skilful workmen were fashioning oval *coupes*. A great establishment had arisen, with spacious show-rooms, crammed with onyx ornaments of all descriptions; and at hand there was a walled-in field, where the blocks of marble were lying tumbled about. The place looked like a deserted and long-neglected graveyard, in a corner of which a man was dismally sawing up the gravestones. The truth was wide of the appearance. Every block was worth a lump of gold, and was waiting to be turned into some form of beauty—into a cup to hold a lady's trinkets, or a paper-weight to guard perhaps some slips of "The Life of Caesar!"

"The first room I will show you," said the overseer, who volunteered to do the honours of the paper-printing establishment, "is that in which our English machine works. It was built by a Birmingham firm, and Englishmen brought it over, put it together, and started it. With it we print hundreds of these rolls of paper every day; and are able to produce them at an extraordinarily cheap rate."

The great machine was working its hardest, printing seven or eight colours at once. An endless paper was rolling rapidly as a torrent from it, covered with delicate bunches of roses, and three or four active, lively, barefooted boys were catching up the stream of paper, and with long handles were dexterously

handing it in high festoons on rollers fastened to the ceiling. Youths were supplying the troughs of colour which fed the rollers, while a man gravely overlooked every part of the machine in a dress bespattered with spots of every hue. He looked as though a practical joker had covered him with wafers. Beyond, a boy was cutting the endless festoons that had had time to dry, into lengths of a few metres. Another youth was pasting lengths of unprinted paper into an endless band, that it might pass rapidly through the machine. In another direction the white paper was coiling in graceful undulations through a white milky paste, and passing off, like a white serpent, into the far distance, where it was caught up by two or three barelegged boys, and was hung up to dry. A fourth machine, turned by steam-power and fed by a bare-legged boy who had not the average height of a child eight years of age, was rolling off the dry printed paper into rouleaux. The damp pasty odour that pervaded this scene, in which pale children were playing a part, was exceedingly disagreeable; nor was it pleasant to watch these quick-witted active lads doing work in breathless haste, feeding steam machinery, or gathering up its doings. Some of them bounced into the shop with a laugh, or hummed a song, as they staggered off with a load of rouleaux on their head, or were met playing on the dirty staircase. What little childhood was in them would burst out at every opportunity, to be repressed by the workmen. They must buckle seriously to their eleven hours of daily work. I pointed to one bright-eyed boy, and asked whether he was not a good

little workman ?—“I can’t say much for him,” was the answer, “he has not got all his play out of his head yet.”

The answer sounded sadly on my ears. The lad was hardly old enough to be breeched ; and he had not got all the play out of his head ! Had he been of gentle parents he would not have been allowed to play alone under the Tuilleries chestnuts.

As we went from department to department, and made our way, with difficulty, down long vistas of hanging paper—now red as a winter sunset, and now blue, as though it had caught the colour of a southern lake—past acres of golden flowers, and rich amber flock patterns—where the wool and metal dust made the air almost suffocating to the uninitiated—darting on all sides, crowding every staircase, were the pale-faced lads necessary to the paper-stainer. Where all the dearer and more elaborate paper was printing, the work was done by hand. At every window, reaching down the long shops, the perspective of which was lost in the distance, was stationed a workman at his bench, with his well of colour at his side. To his right was a long lever. He dipped the block with which he was printing into the colour bath, placed it rapidly upon the paper, and then drew the lever over it with a move of his left hand. While he was doing this, his boy, who was his shadow, was spreading the colour for the next impression. This operation he was compelled to perform with great rapidity ; inasmuch as he must be ready the moment his master adjusted the lever, to jump upon the end of it, and rise and fall by its elasticity, and

rebound a certain number of times, in order to make the exact impression required for the pattern. The boys rising and falling upon these levers at every window, had the effect of a game of see-saw played by fifty or sixty lively lads. Their faces, their haste, and their skill in rising and falling the exact number of times required, soon told another story. They were working, and very hard, indeed, behind their masters. For, not only were they the distributors of the colour, and the printers of the pattern, they were the hangers of the printed paper to dry. This was not work enough for some of them. Flock-paper patterns are produced by a very simple and ingenious process. The pattern to be covered with wool is printed with paste. By the printing bench a great trough full of the finest wool-dust is placed. As the paste pattern is printed off, the paper passes over this trough. By beating under it, a red cloud (that rises like theatrical red fire) appears, and falls gently upon the paste pattern. By this simple action a pattern that looks like one cut out of felt, is almost instantaneously produced. Well, where a paper-stainer is producing this pattern (a highly-priced one), he expects his boy to spread the paste, mount the lever, and beat the trough of wool, to say nothing of hanging up the paper to dry. The rapidity and precision with which some of the boys performed all these operations, showed that they were not brought to the work yesterday for the first time. Yet the oldest and most accomplished among them, was a mere lad!

The overseer drew my attention to a series of

broad placards that were pasted against the walls of one of the *ateliers*.

"These," said he, "are the lists of the patterns we are printing, or have printed lately. The series extends over ten years. Every pattern in the house is known by its number, so that every workman can see at a glance the price that has been agreed upon in common, for it. I drew up all those pattern lists and prices myself."

They were clearly made out, and were in the workshop, posted in a conspicuous place, so that any workman could at once refer to them. These Paris workmen are, I repeat, determined to hold their own against masters. They are not afraid to combine, and they are apt to carry their complaints before the *Prud'hommes*.

"What becomes of these hard-working children who spend the time here which should be given to the schoolroom and the playground? Do they become full-grown, fully-paid workmen, who, in their turn, can claim the best wages of the pattern list?"

I addressed this question to a workman who had accompanied me through my visit. We had left the factory, and were strolling through the Popincourt quarter. My companion replied:

"No, poor children! they will never be in the position their masters occupy. It is almost impossible. They will have a wretched life. Many of them can neither read nor write. When can they be educated? How is it possible to become good workmen? Every working paper-printer must have his boy. In the factory we have just left there are

175 men and exactly the same number of boys. They mostly end miserably. They must be sickly men, working as they now work when mere children. When they grow up, they get any work that is offered to them, or fall into misery and vice."

And can nothing be done to improve this state of things? The paper-printing of Paris is a great industry. It is certainly not the worst paid, and yet it breeds as many wretched slaves, as it does printers! There is a call for shortening the hours of labour—of infant labour especially. But whence comes the call? Not, it is to be feared, from the workmen themselves, who have an interest in degrading their own offspring or the children of their neighbours.

I took the opportunity I had of talking with one of the known thinkers among Paris workmen, to speak with him on the laws generally which concern his class. He gave me a most interesting account of that tramping which is called the "tour of France;" of the customs which are in vogue among workmen journeying from town to town; and more especially of the new institution which has been established at Bordeaux, with its centre in Paris, by working men of various trades; with the view of bringing the working classes of all countries into amicable relations.

"The Paris workmen," said my informant, who spoke from the fulness of his knowledge of dozens of workmen's societies, and the habits of the workmen of Paris—"don't make the tour of France like the rest. I mean, the workmen born and bred in

Paris don't. They have nothing to gain. This is the centre. The provincials flock to us *à la bonne heure!* Well, we wanted something better than the old *compagnonage* system, and we believe we have something better. We enforce strict honour in engagements. We don't permit men to run into debt."

I inquired how they prevented it; and, indeed, how debt is met among the Paris workmen. How a tradesman would proceed in order to recover the account of a workman.

"*Ma foi!*" he answered, "if a working man gets into debt with his *marchand de vins*, or any other tradesman, the creditor does absolutely nothing."

I reminded the speaker that something could be deducted from the workman's wages.

"Yes, a tenth," he answered. "But the employers don't care to be bored with these deductions. Again, the man, finding one-tenth of his wages deducted, can leave the patron's employ and go to a new workshop. To follow him, the first proceedings must be repeated. It isn't worth the trouble."

I suggested that a seizure of the debtor's goods could be made.

"Yes," the workman continued, with a shrug of the shoulders, "but when there is nothing to seize! What has a workman in the world! The creditor cannot touch his bed, his clothes, nor his tools. And there is no arrest. The debt is generally looked upon as lost, unless the man is willing and able to pay."

I explained the laws for debt in England, at which my friend shook his head emphatically. "That

couldn't be done here," he said. "But we touch the members of our societies. When a man on his travels goes to *la mère* (the mother being the house of meeting of his society), "he is received at once. He is asked to show his member's *livret*. We then refer to our correspondence, and if the member has run away from a town without having paid 'the mother,' he is not received. He is a disloyal member. He may travel the tour of France, and he will find in every town the black mark set against his name. But I will give you the laws and statistics of our International Union of Workmen."

## BOOK III.

### WORKING MEN'S SECRET SOCIETIES.

#### CHAPTER I.

The Union Benevolent Society—Its Organization—The Hotel of Madame de Montijos—The Right of Road—The Annual Banquet—The Union's Last Annual Report—The Tour of France.

I PASS now to the important organization of working men, which has been struggling for life during the last thirty years, and aspires to link the working classes of all civilized communities in a brotherhood. The motto of the Union Benevolent Society (*Société de Bienfaisance de l'Union*) is “Humanity! devotion!” It was established on the 15th of August 1832, to destroy the prejudices that existed among the corporations of workmen, and which led to frequent collisions, and very often to the dock of the correctional police. The quarrels and fights that frequently took place on the road when workmen were performing their tour round France, were to give way to a general and cordial friendship among men of every trade. Their education was to be completed; their morality was to be promoted. Every member of the Union was to be a good and honest working man. The promoters of the Union declared that every journeyman compelled to leave his native place and to travel and work in unknown localities, in order

to perfect his trade education, wanted support and help. They proposed, then, that all trades should combine to render mutual help to each other. On their list of rules they printed two hands clasped—like those which mark the resting-place of Abelard and Héloïse.

A central office was established in Paris, with general offices in the great provincial towns, and private offices in communication with them. It was agreed that every working man between the ages of 17 and 35 should be admissible, irrespective of trade or country. On this liberal basis the society still remains.

The candidate for admission must be a *bond* *file* working man, sound in mind and limb, of good character, and furnished with his *livret* and other papers, as directed by the law. He is examined by the society's doctor at the expense of the society. On applying to be admitted a member, the candidate must deposit five francs, the cost of his reception; if, however, he cannot pay all this sum at once, he may deposit half of it, on his giving a promise to deposit the remaining half on the day of his reception. His name, trade, etc., are posted in the office, where the members meet, during one month. He may have the rules and regulations of the society, for which he is charged 40 centimes. There is an election for each candidate, however great the number on the list may be. The candidate who, after having paid his entrance fee, decides not to become a member, will have his deposit-money returned, provided he gives notice within a certain day. Should a

candidate who has retired present himself again for election, he will be admitted only on payment of a double entrance fee, and he will have to serve a double novitiate. The same law is enforced in the case of the candidate who, having deposited half his entrance fee, makes default in the second payment. To a rejected candidate the society returns all the money he has paid, except the price of the rules and regulations, namely, 40 centimes. I would submit this rule to the consideration of divers societies in England, who mulct the man they reject.

Every candidate must be free from debt to any society he may have left.

The elected member is a novice during one month after his election. At the expiration of this month he becomes a full member. He can vote at the meetings; and is entitled to relief. The novice does not pay his subscription until he has become a full member.

The government of this society is in the hands of a committee, composed of four, five, or seven members, according to the number of the members. These committee-men include a president, a secretary, a treasurer, and syndics. In towns where the society has only one office or place of meeting, a syndic of each trade in the town is on the committee. The committees are elected every six months by the absolute majority of all the full members, at the monthly Sunday meeting of January and July. Committee-men are eligible for re-election until they have been two years in office, when they are compelled to spend six months out of office. This is an admirable regu-

lation, that destroys the possibility of the bad government of a clique. The society have other peculiar laws. The members of the committee take the duties of secretary, treasurer, etc., in rotation. At an election, when candidates for office obtain an equal number of votes, the eldest is declared elected. Should the two candidates be also of the same age, he who has been the longest time in the society is chosen. Delegates from the private offices assist at the deliberations of the general office. No member who is under 21 years of age can be a delegate. No member can be a committee-man who cannot read and write, or who has not been a full member six months. There is a fine of one franc for every member who shall write irrelevant words on his voting paper. This fault, if committed at a general meeting, entails a fine of two francs. The members who cannot write, vote verbally, or choose a fellow-member to fill up their voting-paper.

The president of the Union presides at the meetings, puts resolutions to the vote, decides disputes, authorizes a member to speak, calls to order, and convokes extraordinary meetings on his own responsibility; at the instigation of a majority of the committee, or of one-sixth of the full members. The ordinary meetings are monthly; but the president or three full members can always call an ordinary meeting. The oldest members present who can read and write take the places of absent committee-men. The president has the secretary on his right, the treasurer on his left, and two syndics are posted at the farther end of the hall. Every member who does not un-

cover when the chair is taken, pays twopence into the benevolent fund, and a second offence of this description is met with a fine of fivepence.

The secretary receives the subscriptions of the members, while the president acknowledges them by stamping the receipt form on the members' *livrets*. After a given delay, the members who are absent and have not paid, are fined five sous. The members are auditors of the committee's accounts in rotation. The financial business over, the letters, etc., which have been received are read; members address any observations they may have to make for the benefit of the society or of themselves, and then new members are formally received. Their names are called over, and the president asks each man whether he voluntarily becomes a member of the Union, having read its rules. The candidate, answering in the affirmative, then retires, accompanied by a syndic. The president then bids all who are in favour of the admission of the candidate, to remain in their seats; while those members who oppose the election are called upon to rise. The majority in favour of the candidate must be four-fifths of the voting members. When a candidate is rejected he is re-introduced to the meeting, and the president, amid profound silence, informs him of the fact. The successful candidate returns to the meeting, and is conducted by the syndic to the president. The president informs him that he [is] henceforth a member of the union, and presents him with a *livret* of rules, etc. The new member then reads aloud—"I promise and covenant, before all, to observe and obey with honour the rules

of the Union Society." On the book delivered to him are inscribed his name in full, age, birthplace, and occupation. It also bears his signature.

The operations of the Union are registered in thirteen books. Thirteen books are kept in each office of the society, viz.:—Register A, for the names of members and their respective positions in the society; Register B, for the debts of members either to the society or to their employers; Register C, for members who have been expelled or who have seceded—these three registers are kept by the president; Register D is for letters and correspondence; Register E, for insertion of *procès-verbaux*; Register F, for the detailed accounts of the payments of every member—these three books are kept in the possession of the secretary; Register G contains the receipts and disbursements; Register H, receipts. Register F is a double one, and is held by both the secretary and the treasurer. The treasurer, then, like the secretary and the president, holds three books. Register I is a list of the sick; Register J is a list of the candidates; Register K is a list of members who are out of work, and of establishments where workmen are wanted. This important book is kept open at the office, or house of call; and the landlord gives it over to the keeping of the syndic of the week, whose turn it is to do duty.

"This," said my friendly and intelligent informant, "is very useful to us. It is so difficult, in Paris especially, to put your hand on a number of skilled workmen, if you want them for some pressing emergency. I remember one day when the hotel of

Madame de Montijos was undergoing alterations for a *fête*—I was at work there—when the Empress arrived to examine the decorations. Her Majesty ordered many alterations, especially in the lighting. But it was a question whether these alterations could be made in three days. Eight or nine chandeliers of great size would have to be made. My employer stepped forward, and offered to have everything ready in time. It was no easy matter. He rushed up to me and said, ‘Can you make eight or nine chandeliers in four days?’ I answered that everything was possible with money. He assured me he was not afraid of expense. I undertook the job. What did I do? I posted off instantly to our Union office. I wanted an extra number of fresh hands —there I was certain to find them. Had it not been for the Union I could not have undertaken the job. I offered them eight francs a day, and soon had them all snug at work in the *atelier*.’

Register L contains the addresses of the members. The four last-mentioned books are always at the office, in the custody of the syndic on duty for the week. Each office has its own fund, which is fed by the subscriptions of the members and by fines. No office, however, is allowed to keep at one time more than the expenses of an ordinary year, calculated on an average of five years; the surplus must be sent to the central fund in Paris. The landlord of the house in which the members meet, holds the cash-box, and he delivers it over only to a majority of the committee, to be used for the legitimate objects of the society. He must not allow it to be removed

from under his roof without an authorization from the general arrondissement office. The cash-box is well protected. It is closed by two locks of different construction. The president holds the key of one lock, and the secretary that of the second lock. In the box is the cash with the cash-book, wherein the balance must be written in letters at length. But this is not all. The double-locked box is deposited in another box, of which the treasurer keeps the key. The cash balance is kept in duplicate. One is signed by the landlord and handed over to the committee, who, together with the landlord, are responsible for the society's fund.

Every member pays one franc and a half monthly to his bureau. The subscription can be increased, if an increase is judged necessary; and even members who are out of work are not excused the non-payment of their subscriptions. The committee have the power to spend to the extent of ten francs out of the funds, on any emergency not provided for by the rules of the society; but if, at the next meeting of the members, the majority does not approve of the extra ordinary expenditure, the committee are compelled to refund it out of their own pockets. The monthly subscriptions are payable in advance. The member who owes more than four francs to the society, is suspended; and he who owes more than nine francs ceases to be a member *ipso facto*. Even sick members who are receiving assistance are bound to pay their monthly subscription; the sick, however, who have been so long as eight days are exempt. Every local office is bound to send to the central

office in Paris an exact account of its receipts and expenditure.

The correspondence of the Union is conducted in a most orderly manner. The small local offices report their condition to the general offices; and these, in their turn, report to the central office. Book K is the important book; and its keeping is regulated with great nicety. Men out of work are inscribed in the order of their application. The first comer is the first served. Should a man whose turn it is to have employment found him refuse the work offered it becomes the right of the next man in succession. The man who has refused is then placed last on the list of the day. The next day he retakes his rank at the head. It is the duty of the syndics of the week to watch over the engagements of workmen with employers, and to see that the terms are mutually satisfactory. A workman on the K list can refuse the work that is offered him, on three conditions, viz.:—1. When the work is far off in the country; 2. When the work which an employer offers requires some special skill which the workman does not possess; 3. When the workman has had a serious quarrel with the applicant for labour. Every member of the Union is bound to tell the syndic of the week of any work that is waiting for hands, under penalty of a fine of one franc; if the defaulter be a member of the committee the fine is two francs. A member of the society who obtains work for a man who is not of the society, is fined five francs; and if he does not pay the fine he is expelled the Union. A workman who is not punctual at his post

when the syndic has found work for him, is replaced by the man next on the list. He who has been late on three occasions, is placed at the end of the list in Book K. Should the syndic not be punctual to his appointment he incurs a fine of 50 centimes. Provision is made for sick men out of work, so that they may, on their recovery, take a good place on the list. Again, a workman for whom work shall have been found, and who keeps it only three days, returns to his old place on the list.

These are a few of the regulations of the Union which protects workmen while making the tour of France.

The manner in which the authorities of the Union trace their members from town to town on their working tour through France, is interesting. Every travelling member is compelled to have his *livret* *rivalé* by the local office, and to have the seal of the society attached to it. Every member on his arrival in a new town, is compelled to show this *livret* at the local office or establishment, to the committee-man or landlord. His arrival is inscribed in his book, and it is returned to him at once. Every member of the society, whatever his position may be, must present himself at the office of the town in which he has arrived within three days of his arrival, or pay a fine of one franc. It being compulsory on members leaving a town to have their book examined, the committee of the town in which a member has just arrived can see whether or no he has fulfilled all his duties imposed by the rules of the society. When a member desires to leave a town he must deposit

his book at the office for examination, two days before his departure. Should the committee neglect their duty in examining it, its owner, backed by the evidence of three fellow-members that he has fulfilled his part of the contract with the society, can leave the town with his book unexamined. The officers who have neglected to examine the book have to pay a fine of three francs. The committee may refuse to stamp a member's *livret* as regular if, having incurred debts, he refuses to work in order to pay them, or will not leave a security for their liquidation. A member who has given cause of complaint to his foreman or others, when this complaint has been declared well founded by a majority of members, is also liable to have his *livret* returned to him unstamped. A majority of members only, can declare a member to be purged of his sins towards the society. No condemnations or records of debts are ever written on a member's book, the society having other means of punishing misdeeds. The member whose rights are suspended cannot obtain a regular *visa* to his book. But the office is bound to furnish him with a letter to his next town, stating precisely the position in which he stands towards the society. Any member who leaves the town where the office to which he belongs is situated, must send his new address to it within 15 days of his departure; or, in default, pay a fine of 50 centimes. The same fine is imposed on the travelling member who, having started from one town to another, changes or stops on his way. A member who falls ill at a distance from his office, must send his book, together with a

doctor's certificate, as soon as he is able. Should there be, however, no doctor in the locality where the member has fallen ill, it behoves the office to make proper inquiries into the nature of his illness.

The members themselves choose their places of meeting, which are generally in the modest hotels at which travelling workmen put up. The landlords of these hotels are bound to conform to the regulations of the Union. They have a right of complaint against any member who infringes these rules; and every member may in like manner complain to the committee of the *Méches* of the landlord. The appointment of an hotel as the local rendezvous of the society, must be approved by the general bureau of the arrondissement. When the society leaves an establishment, every member is bound to leave with it. A month's grace is given to members who are in debt to the landlord. But if at the expiration of this time they do not join the new house, they are excluded from the society. All the members of a local society are joint guarantees for the debts of members, to the extent of six francs. Should the landlord allow a member to leave the town with his book *en règle*, being in debt to him, the society ceases to be responsible for this debt. A member who becomes an employer in an establishment of his own, can remain with the society, only in the position of honorary member.

Let us now glance at the money and other help afforded to members, by the society. In towns where there are one or more offices, the society has its regularly appointed doctor and chemist, who are paid

quarterly, and who furnish advice and medicine to sick members, as in our own provident societies and unions at home. Every sick member, whether he be at home or in the hospital, is entitled to one franc a day during the first month of his illness. During the second month of his illness he receives 15 sous a day, and 10 sous during the third month. Should his illness last beyond three months, a subscription for his benefit is made at every meeting of the society, and the amount of this subscription is all he receives. The sick have a right through all their illness to any medicines prescribed for them by any doctors. If a sick member lives in a district where there is no chemist appointed by the society, he has a claim to an extra allowance of 10 sous, to pay for his own medicines; provided he is not in an hospital. Members whose illness has been caused by fighting or drunkenness, cannot claim any money help from the society. They are entitled only to gratuitous medical attendance. A member afflicted with a cutaneous disease, and has not made it known either to the secretary of the office or to his fellow-members, is suspended for two months. An illness the length of which does not exceed three days, is regarded merely as an indisposition, and gives no claims on the society's funds. A member whose sickness has ceased for five days, and who is then taken ill again with a new form of disease, is entitled to begin with his one franc a day as when he was first sick. Any sick member found out of his house without permission of the doctor, or in a state of intoxication, forfeits his right on the sick fund. When a sick

member is considered to be in a state of danger, the president of his society names two members to nurse him by day, and two to nurse him by night. Each member told off to serve as nurse is bound to attend upon the patient during six hours. Members who are out of work are chosen before members who would have to give up work in order to attend to these labours. If the member in danger be suffering from a contagious disease, a professional nurse is appointed to take care of him, and the cost of such nurse is paid by a whip among the members. Sick members who fail to inform the committee when they are sufficiently recovered to go to work, and continue to draw upon the sick fund, are compelled to refund the sum improperly drawn, or to be suspended for two months, with two francs' fine. The companions who have helped them to deceive the society are liable to the same penalties. When a member is dangerously ill, the society in a paternal spirit inquire whether he has taken proper precautions for the preservation of his worldly effects; if not, these precautions are taken for him. When a member arrives in a town without money, the society can guarantee him credit for a certain sum, or pay him his right of road to the next town where the Union has an office; but no member can be sent back to the place from whence he came. A member proved to have demanded the right of road, having already money in his possession, is expelled from the society. The right of road is six sous per myriamètre.

The Union has provided wisely and considerately

for cases where members may be thrown into prison. A member who is taken into custody, and whose discharge cannot be at once effected by the society, is entitled to fivepence a day up to the conclusion of his trial, unless the society have proof of his guilt. Should he be acquitted, he is placed at the head of the list in register K. In each office of the society there is a box to receive the voluntary contributions of members. The funds from this box are used for the relief of members whose distress does not fall within the regulations of the society. This extra relief can be given only by a vote at a meeting of the society. Every member who has completed his sixtieth year, and who has been during 25 years a member of the society, has a right to claim a pension. Again, a member of eight years' standing, who is stricken with an incurable disease, is entitled to a pension. These pensions are granted every year by the central office. They are fixed at £20 per annum, payable quarterly. When the applicant for a pension has any other source of income, the society grants him only the additional sum that will make up his total income to £20; any work, however, which he may be able to do is not considered as fixed income. If the pecuniary position of the pensioner changes, the grant from the society is increased or diminished, so that his income shall still be £20 per annum. If a pensioner hides the real state of his means, the society makes an inquiry at his expense, and deducts from him the amount he has improperly obtained from the Union.

When a member dies, all his co-members receive

a letter from the office, bidding them to his funeral. Every member who is not present when the funeral procession moves forward is fined one franc. If he has not joined the procession before it leaves the cemetery, he is a second time fined one franc. When a member dies away from his friends, the office is bound to inform them of his decease within eight days, giving an account of any properties he may have left. This letter must be registered ; the society pays all the indispensable expenses of the deceased member's funeral. The utmost order, decency, and good feeling are required from all members towards each other, especially at their meeting-place or house of call. Fines varying from ten sous to three francs punish jokes made at the expense of the society, the slander of members, or the abuse of any persons in the establishment. The fine is always doubled if the offence is committed between officer and member. Any member who raises a false report against another member is liable to a fine, varying from one, to three francs. When a member's conduct is to be brought before a meeting, he must be warned of the fact three days before the meeting. If after this notice he do not appear, he is judged in his absence. If the accused desire to appeal against the judgment of a meeting, he must do so within ten days of the judgment. The plaintiffs who fail to appear when the case comes on, are liable to a fine. A condemnation, to be valid, must be carried by three-fourths of the members present at the meeting. A member who, when he falls ill, is indebted to the society, receives only half the usual assistance until his debt

has been liquidated. Every member who has been a defaulter to the extent of six francs, to the committee or to a landlord, is scratched from the list of members, and can only be re-established in the society on payment of his debt. Absence from society meetings are atoned by fines. The absentee from three consecutive meetings who has not justified his absence is suspended; and the absentee from four consecutive meetings is scratched out of the list of members. A member whose name has been erased from the books as a defaulter only may be reinstated on payment of the money he owed when his name was scratched, with a new entrance-fee, provided he is prepared to pass a novitiate of two months. A man whose name has been scratched three times cannot, however, re-enter the Union. A member who, by misconduct or extravagance, has contracted debts exceeding 40 francs, may be suspended for two months; and if at the end of this time he has not put his pecuniary affairs in order, his name is struck out of the list of members. Illness, grave family matters, attendance at a funeral, or any act required by the authorities, are held valid excuses for non-attendance at the society's meetings. Press of work is also a valid excuse for absence; except from a general meeting or a member's funeral. A member can give notice of his secession from the society at a monthly or extraordinary meeting, where a majority of the members can hear his reasons for his retirement. A member who had seceded, and is more than 40 years of age when he seeks re-admission, is not accepted, if two years have expired since

he left the society. A diploma is granted to seceding members who have well discharged all the duties of membership. Holders of these diplomas can rejoin the society without passing through a new novitiate.

On the 15th of August in every year, the anniversary of the foundation of the society, a general meeting of the members is held to celebrate it, in a manner agreed upon at an extraordinary meeting held between the previous 20th and 30th of July. At this meeting, arrangements are made for the festive ceremonies, the banquet, etc. No compulsory expense exceeding two francs per member, can be voted. Every absentee on the festive occasion (work being no excuse) pays a fine of two francs. Out of the general expenses, employers, the doctor, and chemist are invited to the banquet. The time spent by delegated members in making the various arrangements, is paid for.

Educational classes are established for the benefit of members, in the towns where their numbers are sufficiently large to make such establishments possible. The expense of these classes never exceeds one franc monthly per pupil. The general offices, or arrondissement offices, are situated in the large towns. It is their duty to watch and govern all the minor offices. These general offices are at Bordeaux, Marseilles, Nantes, Lyons, and Paris. The general bureau consists of all the members of the minor bureaus of the town in which it is situated. Any twenty workmen of the same trade can request to be formed into a separate office; and any fifteen workmen in a town, who are prepared to become

active members of the Union, will be allowed to form themselves into a local society in the Union. The central bureau is a representative governing body of the entire Union, having its offices in Paris. The pension fund of which it disposes, is formed by a tax of five sous on the monthly subscription of every member. It is invested in Government securities. Any member who proposes that the Union shall be dissolved, is at once expelled from it. The adjustment of any difficulty not foreseen in all the above regulations, is arranged by vote.

The reader will have perceived that this comparatively new Union of French working men is in many respects an advance on all previous associations of the working classes. It is built on a fraternal basis that is not limited to the country in which it originated. It is undoubtedly a vast improvement on the old trade systems, which helped journeymen workmen from town to town, through all kinds of disorders and rivalries. It enables all its members, by a moderate subscription, to insure themselves not only the means of travelling from a place where work is scarce to one where it is plentiful, but also to secure themselves comfort in sickness, a pension for their old age, and the means of decent Christian burial. It has, moreover, the advantage of being a completely self-governed institution. Its president, M. Chabaud, is a working lamp-maker. He is a man who is something more than an average workman, or he would not, undoubtedly, have been chosen president of the central office of so important an institution as this Union of working men.

undoubtedly is. It is important at this moment especially, when the self-governed institutions of the working men of various countries seem about to be put on their trial, that the leading working men of England should make a complete and conscientious study of this provident Union, which is the latest development of the intelligence of French workmen. The French and Belgian working classes are already studying each other with great attention. The *Société du Crédit au Travail*, recently established in Paris, and which is, in fact, a labourers' loan society, is likely to be at once imitated in Belgium, where all kinds of associations for working men are rife. The Union has, I believe, already established some branch offices among the subjects of King Leopold.

I have before me the last annual report made by the central office of the Union. It is a most elaborate analytical document. It gives the balance of every office throughout the Union, the amounts realized by fines, entrance fees, sale of regulations, and subscriptions, with the observations of the central office attached to every item of expenditure, and receipts for the future guidance of the branch offices. This report shows that only 19 of the branch offices gave the number of their members on the 1st of January 1861. In these 19 offices there were 945 workmen; 37 offices reported the number of received members at 1212; 16 offices only gave in the number of journeymen's arrivals. These amounted to 1420, while the departures were 1364. Sixteen deaths of members were reported in the course of the year.

Thirty-three offices reported the erasure from their books of 487 names. The number of men who left the offices in debt, as reported by 25 of these offices, was 202. Seventeen offices reported the retirement of 126 members. Only 15 members were expelled during the year. The total number of members reported to the office on the 31st of December 1861, was 2225. According to the report, while Paris contained only 477 members, Bordeaux could boast 661; Lyons had 233, and Marseilles 490. These numbers are not large, but they are a great increase on the preceding report. For instance, the hautes arrondissement, which, on the 1st of January 1861, had only 66 members, could boast, on the 31st of December of the same year, 364 members. Within the same period, the number of members had increased at Bordeaux from 248 to 661, and at Marseilles from 381 to 490. At Lyons the society had not a member in the beginning of the year 1861; and by the end of the year it had sent in 233 adhesions to the Union. In Paris, the majority of the Union men are locksmiths and carpenters. The same trades have the majority at Marseilles and at Bordeaux. The locksmiths are at the head of the list. The total reported receipts of the Union for the year 1861, from all sources, were 44,428 francs. The fines had amounted to 845 francs, the entrance fees and sale of rules to 7233 francs, and the subscriptions to 32,535 francs. Among the items of expenditure I find 14,507 francs given to sick members; medicines, 4024 francs; doctors' fees, 3301 francs; burial fees, 1267 francs; right of road ex-

penses, 1530 francs ; losses on the guarantees given to landlords, 2942 francs ; the total expenditure being 43,057 francs. The balance in hand on the last day of 1861 was 33,784 francs. From the central office I learn that, on the 19th of May in this year, the fund at its disposal was 19,408 francs. This fund consisted of 51 shares in the Western Railway Company, which yield a dividend of 765 francs, and of 4056 francs in cash. This is, it must be confessed, a modest result after the labours through which the central committee have passed ; but it is a good and a sound beginning. The ideas which the promoters of this Union for working men put forth, when they started on their crusade against the old rival trade regulations, were so new and so completely opposed to the deep-rooted prejudices of the French working classes ; that their rapid growth could not reasonably be expected. Every succeeding year, however, is a great advance upon the last. By the frank adoption of the principles of this Union, principles that are methodically reduced to a practically working state, the working classes not only of Paris, but of every industrial centre of the empire, might achieve a dignified social independence. The constitution of the Union is a pure representative one. If the members remain true to themselves, they cannot possibly be compelled to take shelter under the desolating wings of honorary patrons. They will emancipate their order from the slavery of workshop provident funds, in which (as I have shown the reader) the master and the master's aristocratic friends figure as the condescending guardians and distributors of the

savings of labour. And so every man would, as he made "the tour of France," in his lusty youth, sheltered by the provident and brotherly rules of the Union, carry on the road with him, the proud and cheering consciousness of honest independence and self-reliance. Such a Union as this I have described, is a tower of strength in the cause of order,—if rightly treated.

## CHAPTER II.

The Freemasonry of Labour—The Gavots and the Devoirants—Agricol Perdiguier—Master Jacques and Master Soubise—The Towers of Orleans Cathedral—The Mysteries of Initiation—Knights of the Chivalry of Labour—The Children of Solomon—Warrior Craftsmen—The Drawing-School deserted for the Wine-Shop—Workmen Poets—Autocratic Masters and Slave Apprentices—The Mother—Industrial Utopias—Only a Baker—Pâtés de Veille.

I DESIRE to place before the English reader some curious details and stories on the past, present, and probable future of the gigantic workmen's associations of ancient date. I cannot close this subject without giving the reader a history that will enable him to understand how the skilful workmen, for whom France has long been famous, held together after their corporations were destroyed. The two factions into which the great freemasonry of labour—the knights of the plumb and line, chisel and hammer—has been split for some centuries in France, have, in the old time, committed many and great crimes, and have sent numbers of misguided men to the scaffold and the hulks. Both factions traced themselves back to Solomon, and asserted that his laws were their laws. The *Gavots* were the protesting faction, who would not hold blindly by the past. They said, "We owe our origin to Solomon, but other men have regenerated us, and we live under the

laws of these regenerators." But the origin of this freemasonry of labour is a dispute into which I shall not enter. While M. Chovin claims Hiram as founder, Agricol Perdiguier (a redoubtable antagonist, who has sat in Parliament as one of his country's representatives, and is now a publisher of working men's books in the Quartier St. Antoine) answers, "Then how about Master Jacques? Is he the man of the legend, the contemporary of Solomon—perhaps Hiram himself? or is he the Jacques of the towers of Orleans?" The reader will see that here is the basis of a controversy not susceptible of treatment in a sentence. How Master Jacques and Master Soubise figure in the histories, and the songs and satires, of Labour's great mystery, and bond of action; would furnish a most interesting chapter to any writer who wished to supply the world with a complete picture of the progress of the working classes from century to century. The quaint old customs, the mysterious rites, the solemn oaths, the hot disputes about precedence in processions; the flow of the party-coloured ribbon from the head over the shoulder to the heart, and the severe duties imposed by the laws of the lodges or societies—these, all gravely thrown into an historical narrative, where battles and murders mark every page, would read like the history of millions of humble followers of the valiant Knight of the Doleful Countenance, for whom, by the way, Gustave Doré has just done wonders with that inimitable pencil which, when its holder was but a boy, gave form to the mighty humour of Rabelais. The schisms, and revolutions, and great

battles of the *compagnonage* of the working classes of France, have given birth to a literature of their own. This literature includes volumes of songs and satires, biographies and adventures. The songs of *compagnonage* are set to music, and the portraits of great masters of its mysteries are to be had at Agricol Perdiguier's establishment, in the Rue Traversière St. Antoine. To the outer world only, be it known, is this publisher, and active, enthusiastic historian of his class, M. Perdiguier; among his fellow-workmen he is known as *La Vertu*, and is addressed by them as *La Vertu* only, among his craft. His mission appears to be to obliterate the schism which has brought his craft into disrepute, and to modify the customs and laws of it, so as to bring them in harmony with the spirit of the present times. This schism was begun when a vast number of workmen were employed to build the towers of Orleans Cathedral, in 1401. There appears to have been a great strike and a struggle. Masters Jacques Moler (whose name in his craft was *Flèche d'Orléans*) and Soubise were the managers of these great works. In the midst of them there was a secret combination among the workmen, and they forsook the works. Grave events followed; masses of the revolted workmen went off in boats called *gavotages*, and adopted the name of *Gavots*. No pains were spared to bring the revolted craftsmen to punishment. They were imprisoned, put in irons, or hung up to the nearest tree by the roadside. The Saviour, they said, was the master of their craft. All kinds of disruptions and changes appear to

have followed. Some trades adopted Master Jacques, and some Master Soubise. Some attached themselves to the "Devoir" of Liberty, and others, as the stone-masons, to the "Devoir Etrangers." Masters Jacques Moler and Soubise were triumphant, and assembled their proselytes (to the great sorrow of the craftsmen who remained true to Solomon), and gave out new laws and statutes that were to be strictly obeyed. The mysteries of initiation, the *accolade* or *gilbrette*, were arranged and worked ; those who were received into the craft swore by their soul, and by the blood in their veins, not to violate the secrets of the craft ; to love their neighbours ; to punish traitors, and to maintain the rights of the craft, with all their strength. Fantastic names were given to the craftsmen of various trades. Thus the carpenters were called *bonsdrilles* ; and the saddlers, *jolis-compagnons*.

Without following closely the history of the chivalry of labour that, in the middle ages, raised great and noble works which are the wonder and admiration of the present day—a chivalry that was spread far and wide—it suffices to say that it was profoundly affected by the religious troubles that agitated France ; and that, when the Revolution came by the towers of Orleans Cathedral, it found masses of men who had been gradually estranging themselves from their brothers. They met as sworn members of one craft, and parted implacable enemies. New lights were glimmering ; and some working men were even then beginning to think for themselves. The followers of Jacques and Soubise gave them-

selves new names. They called themselves foreign craftsmen, and craftsmen of liberty, saying they were neither serfs nor slaves, and that they held themselves free to travel in all the countries on the face of the earth. They who remained true to the old craft admitted all religions; but only the building trades. These knights of the old chivalry of labour, who were learned workmen, and travelled safe with their secret signs, building great monuments in all the capitals of Europe; were in downright earnest about the smallest matter appertaining to their craft. It was family love and powerful protection to them, wherever they went. It was a Christian family that had Europe for a hearth; and religious feuds suddenly broke the hearth in twain! The Secessionists invented a legend by which they made Jacques of Orleans the contemporary of Solomon; and caused him to arrive at Marseilles only four hundred years before Marseilles was built! A brilliant dream was presented to the imagination of apprentices, who were charmed into the new craft. This craft admitted only good Catholics, but included all kinds of trades; and so the two great families or crafts of working men started on a rival race—their jealousies, hatreds, and feuds becoming stronger year by year. Their rivalry was incessant, and each craft boasted that it included better workmen than its antagonist. The children of Solomon met the children of Jacques in the streets or in the road, and reviled them, and pointed the finger at them; and fought with them. And so through centuries of violence, the two crafts moved side by side, each making it a moral duty to injure

the other. Both, assailed from the pulpit, and stricken by the law, travelled unsubdued through centuries. Their great works, and the men of extraordinary skill and knowledge they sent forth from their bosom, kept them alive.

After the peace of 1815, thousands of young soldiers, fresh from campaigns and battle-fields, returned to civil life, and betook themselves to work by which they could gain their daily bread. They joined the rival crafts, and transferred those bellicose propensities which were useful under the flag, to the peaceful walks of labour. These warrior workmen became ferocious journeymen of their craft. They had dropped the sword only to take up the stick. In all the towns and along all the roads of France, disastrous fights and disorders ensued. The magistrates interfered, the guilty were severely punished, and still the children of Solomon struck fiercely at the children of Jacques. Old customs that appeared ridiculous to sober-minded men of a new generation, had survived among the mysteries of the two crafts. As fresh generations appeared upon the scene, many of the young men became sceptical, and would have nothing to do with the craft of Solomon nor with that of Master Jacques. Journeymen of the craft found it difficult to make young apprentices yield them that slavish obedience and deference which, according to craft law, they owed them. Reformers started up, and new societies were instituted. I have already fully described the laws and customs of the most important modern innovation on the old craft. During the last thirty years the dis-

ciples of Solomon and of Jacques have lost so much ground before the invading army of reformers, that workmen can now get on very well in any trade without being craftsmen. The working classes are no longer divided into craftsmen of Solomon or of Jacques, but into craftsmen, non-craftsmen, and Union men. Various trades have broken off into mutual benefit societies of their own. Assailed by the ridicule of their enemies, and weak because inert themselves, the old craftsmen of Solomon and Jacques will speedily disappear altogether—if they continue to turn a deaf ear to the warning voices of their best friends, who call upon them to modify their ancient and ridiculous customs. Among these friends Agricol Perdiguier appears to be the foremost. He laments the decline of the great knowledge and skill which the old masters of his craft possessed. He seems to turn back with sorrow to the beginning of the century—to the times when the rival crafts engaged in honourable contests of skill; as when, in 1804, two rival societies constructed two pulpits, and the contest was, who should produce the more skilful work. Those were days when craftsmen studied hard, when a workman took rank according to his skill, and when a skilled craftsman found help and paternal welcome wherever he might choose to travel. M. Perdiguier grieves to see the drawing-school deserted for the wine-shop. He laments to find these wine-shops increasing in number everywhere, and the old craftsmen's working schools with closed doors. Pens, compasses, and books, have given place to cards, bottles, and billiards. Intemperance is

spreading ; the workmen are isolating themselves in their selfishness, and are laughing at the old craft where their fathers held honourable places, and became accomplished workmen. They are loosing the old bond of union that made them strong. Not only have the rival crafts forgotteh their street fights, they have also, it would appear, almost ceased to take interest in that which was really good in the ancient institution. A proposition is now before them for the fusion of the rival crafts of carpenters ; but, at the outset, difficulties appear. One craft complains that the other has not given journeymen their proper title ; and has boasted of its own works without mentioning those of its rival. Hereupon a sharp controversy ensues between the carpenters who happen to be *Devoirants*, and the carpenters who are *Gavots*. One craft asks the other, Who made the pulpit of Montpellier ? The *Devoirants* challenge the *Gavots* to show them a workman like Champagne. The *Gavots* in their turn assert that they have produced more poets than their rivals. Can the *Devoirants* put any muses against *Bon-accord* and *Prel-à-bien-Faire* ? The list of the singing birds of the *Gavots* is set forth by their champion, with pride. These songsters of peace, who desire concord among all craftsmen, are of all trades and occupations, down to the tillers of the soil. The literary workmen of France are, indeed, in extraordinary force. Not only have the quarrels and secret mysteries of their craft led them into pamphleteering, but they have been also large contributors to the popular poetry of their time, and to the history of their class. It is satis-

factory to those leading workmen who desire to unite, reform, and consolidate the secret bond of union that held all the working men of France together many centuries ago ; to find that the ink which has been spilt over their *compagnonage* has, at any rate, done away with the old brutalities which disfigured it. In Paris, and in some of the departmental towns, already rival crafts give mutual invitations to feasts and dances. "Books have brought this glorious state of things about, but chiefly my books, published since 1854," cries *La Vertu*, ex-representative of the people. *La Vertu* and the chief of the workmen poets, one *Vendôme-la-clef-des-cœurs*, have brought about these wonders ; but the two crafts have still their rival writers, and, having their rival writers, have, it is hardly necessary to add, their rival vanities. These rivalries threaten to retard a little the final fusion for which the authors have striven. At this present moment it is almost impossible to say whether the contending crafts will do more than feast and dance together as craftsmen. The chief danger which *La Vertu* and others have to fear, lies in the indifference of their readers, and in the growth of other societies. Our craft is valuable on many accounts, say its supporters. It produces and protects skilful and learned workmen. We desire to form it into one harmonious whole, and neither savings banks nor mutual benefit societies will compensate the working classes for the loss of its protection. The bitterest enemy of every kind of secret society, could not justly deny that these crafts of working men, disfigured as they have been by all kinds of

extravagances and violences, had nevertheless tended greatly towards the production of highly skilled and learned workmen. The conspicuous craftsmen who now support the old institution, and wish to reform it; see that its old defects may be lopped away as so many weakening branches, and that then the old tree would flourish with renewed vigour. Both crafts have, however, already suffered so deeply, not only by the extravagances and disputes of their journeymen and apprentices, but also by the ridicule that has been cast on their antiquated forms and extravagant pretensions; that, important as their complete resuscitation would be to the working classes of France, it is far from certain that it could now be accomplished.

I have read the men's own versions of their recent internal dissensions. They are for the most part very petty quarrels indeed, wholly unworthy of an intelligent body of working men. They had generally been revolutions made by apprentices against the tyranny of journeymen. No nobles in those "merry days of old" ever extracted slavish observances from their villains with stronger hands, than those exercised even in recent years by the journeymen of a craft over their apprentices. The journeymen are a proud body of aristocrats, who exact deference from their inferiors, the apprentices. The apprentice cannot eat at the same table with his lordship the journeyman, nor sleep with him. An apprentice cannot enter a meeting of journeymen, whereas a journeyman may stalk into any meeting of apprentices. In every way, in short, the journey-

men have the upper hand. They have the advantage at all points ; and are the favoured guests with *La Mère*. Their tyranny was borne in the old time ; and I suppose that every bullied apprentice comforted himself with the idea that he, in his turn, would become a journeyman, with the blessed privilege of cuffing and snubbing the next generation of apprentices. But of late years a new spirit has come over the dream of working men, and young artisans will not bow deferentially to fellow-workmen who happen to be journeymen of their craft. All kinds of disorders, and some of them of a very grave description, have broken out between journeymen and apprentices, on the tour of France. These internal quarrels have led to the secession of masses of apprentices, who have formed themselves into new societies, under all kinds of strange names. They have preferred immediate free action among themselves, for the protection of their common interests, to the degradations imposed on apprentices of a craft, although their sufferings as apprentices might end in elevation to the rank of journeymen, with a new name, fine cane, and floating colours. This desire for independence, is strong in the young. The rising generations of the last thirty years, have heard so much in France about all kinds of industrial Utopias, and they have seen so much ridicule thrown on all kinds of empty forms, that they have been apt to side with the scoffers, rather than to make serious submission to the superiors of their craft. These superiors have clung with the tenacity of a privileged class, to all the outward forms of their dignity. They

would not see that the new generation was laughing at them, with their sticks and their ribbons hanging from the crown of their head over their heart, and all those mysterious rites of admission and vows of brotherhood. There is, however, at the present moment, a great movement on foot, the object of which is to bring all the working classes of France into one great secret society; with new rules, based on those of the two old factions, and so harmonized as to be acceptable to all classes of workers. The objects, I must repeat, which the two rival crafts have always had in view, are meritorious ones. They were simply great benefit and mutual protection societies. In many respects they resembled our English trades' unions. They were, in short, a mixture of an English trade union and the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows. All who are of opinion that trades' unions and benefit societies, with secret signs, are harmful institutions in a State, will chuckle over the decline of the French *Devoirants* and *Gavots*, and hope that their leaders will not be able to reassemble their scattered hosts, under a new popular constitution. Those, on the contrary, who believe that it is necessary to the wellbeing of working men that they should be associated; in order, not only to make provision against sickness and old age, but also to show something like a formidable front to capital, will be much interested in watching the issue of the present movement among the working classes of France. The Provident Union, which embraces all trades, and appears to be a well-organized, sober institution, has, as I have already shown in a previous chapter, not made much progress as yet.

I suspect that it is a little too prim and quakerly. We see among the more sober-minded English working men, that banners and scarfs and costumes and wands of office have a strong attraction. They delight in masters and grand-masters, and various other titles. These dignities are food for the imagination; they are objects of ambition. A working man aspires to become a somebody among his fellows. He delights in office like other classes of his fellow-countrymen; and covers himself with its frippery with delight. No mere benefit society offering help in sickness, in age, and at death, could enrol the thousands of members, I may say the millions, who are banded together in England as Oddfellows, Foresters, and Druids. Membership of an assurance company carries no title or outward dignity with it; but see how proudly Oddfellows will carry their banners at a high festival; and how at the summons of their great officers, they will peaceably muster some forty thousand strong! They are, and feel themselves to be, part of a vital institution that has high offices and symbols of greatness in its gift. They see clever men from among them, work their way until they become their chiefs. They find educated and thoughtful men willing to become honorary members of their body. The late Prince Consort was, I believe, an Oddfellow.

If such institutions flourish in our midst, among our race, that cares less for spangles and gewgaws and all outward show than the French people; we cannot be surprised when we find that the French working classes have been held together through all

inds of social disruptions, and religious and political troubles, by forms and adornments that, at first sight, appear to be childish. Religious dissensions, as we have seen, first made a split in the great craft of French working men. But still so strong was their veneration for the craft, the forms and customs of which had been handed down to them from their forefathers, that the two separate bodies flourished apart through centuries; and have only within the memory of living men, suffered by serious internal commotions. Even now they are threatened with extinction because their elders have not put the institution in harmony with the new ideas that, by the force of education, have been spread throughout the civilized world. The education that has taught the French working man the hollow vanity of many of their old rites, has also taught them the danger of isolation. It will be observed that all the young men who have broken off from the old craft—whether from the children of Solomon, of Jacques, or of Soubise—have not for a moment remained isolated. They have at once formed themselves into new societies; in which they have established the reforms they could not obtain from the aristocratic journeymen. The *Devoirants* appear to have been the great sticklers for all the ancient privileges of the craft. According to *La Vertu* (who, it should be observed, is a *Gavot*), the dominant characteristic of the *Devoirant*. journeyman is pride. He is an aristocrat, if there ever was one. He stalks into the house of *La Mère* (a very small eating and lodging house), and at once is on the *qui vive* for the observance of all the respect

he conceives to be due to his rank of journeyman. He expects the Mother to prepare a place apart for his repast. He cannot eat with the first comer, who may belong to no craft, or be that inferior creature, an apprentice ! Hats off before the journeyman ! He must be addressed with respect. There must be no *tu-toiring* within his hearing ; indeed, an apprentice may be his brother, and he shall not *tu-toie* him. This question of the *thee* and *thou* has played a great part in the disruption of the craft. The journeyman pretends that his class is so far above that of the apprentice, and that the conversation at the journeyman's table is so superior to the conversation held at the apprentice's table, that when an apprentice is suddenly raised to the rank of journeyman, and so admitted to labour's upper chamber, he is dazzled and astonished at the greatness of the new world he has entered. Now, the Gavots are more liberal in this respect than the *Devoirants*. The *Gavot* journeymen are on terms of friendship and fraternal equality with their apprentices. They have apparently, always been open to the discussion of reforms. While they are most anxious to maintain a craft that has now existed upwards of four centuries and a half, they are ready to modify their sashes, and canes, and mysteries. They will become brothers of the new *Pro*vident Union, and are ready to institute any new forms or dignities that may be considered well adapted to the exigencies of the present time. They go so far as to suggest medals of merit for workmen *hors ligne* ; ribbons of honour of various colours and fashions, to be worn by men who have distinguished themselves

as carpenters, builders, or as learned men in their trade. Their chief desire is to make the tour of France a path of flowers, and not a journey over briars. They declare that they delight to see the man who is working his way round the country, before he settles for life, welcomed with the customary bottle of wine under the roof of *La Mère* when he reaches a new town, and sped gladly on his way, after a "bumper at parting," when he is leaving; his fellow-craftsmen, in brotherly spirit, seeing him some miles out of town, on his road. The reformers who are now agitating amongst the working classes, frankly admit that working men are divided into two sections. There are the imaginative men, who are fond of ribbons, and *fêtes*, and mysteries; and there are the men who detest these things as frivolities, and must have a sober reason for everything. The Provident Union appeals to these men, and will carry them comfortably enough through the tour of France. For the men of lively imagination, for those who delight in generous rivalries, the regenerated craft, with its modified mysteries, and new liberal arrangements as between journeymen and apprentices, may remain. *La Vertu* and others hope that the Union, which is a provident society, with offices in all the towns of the "Tour de France," will act in concert with the rulers of the regenerated craft, and that thus the rising generations of working men of every trade and occupation, will be brought and kept together in one great happy family. *La Vertu* exclaims, appealing to both factions of the craft, "Let us be humane, let us cherish liberal ideas! Let us teach the working

classes to respect themselves, to elevate themselves, to enlighten themselves. Let us study drawing, geometry, architecture, and all that is useful and good. Let the tour of France be one vast school. Let him who starts on it an ignorant apprentice, return home a learned workman. Journeymen, respect the Union. Men of the Union, respect journeymen of the craft. Let this be a time of amnesties, of mutual concessions, and of fraternal songs."

*La Vertu's* exhortations are addressed to working men who have a pride of caste so strong in them, that he is compelled to appeal to the carpenter in order to make him shake the hand of the journeyman baker. He bids them remember that the baker is at work while they are asleep, and that if he can knead and bake them an excellent loaf, he is a praiseworthy workman. " You will answer that he is only a baker," says *La Vertu*, addressing his journeymen carpenters; " but forget your pride, and shake his hand. He works in a bad air through the long nights ; let his sufferings wake your pity." There is something diverting in *La Vertu's* manner, when he begs and prays that his fellow-carpenters will descend to shake a baker's hand. But the appeal is made in all seriousness, and it may serve to show how the working men of France, and especially of Paris, who daubed " Equality" upon every public building some sixteen years ago, understand it among themselves. The working men of the capital have degenerated. They have broken off from their allegiance to the old craft, and they have broken off from the studies that dignified the craft also. They

have become idle, and illiterate; and lovers of pleasure. Their friend whom they sent to represent them in Parliament now says of them that they have grown idle, and that the result has, of late years, been sad. He states that many carpenters, locksmiths, turners, masons, and wood-carvers do not know how to use a pair of compasses, and cannot make the simplest plan. He records with shame, that there are in Paris carvers who know nothing of design nor of the human figure; masons who could not put together a country cottage; carpenters who could not erect a staircase. He looks back with regret to the generation of workmen who flourished from 1830 to 1848. In those times, poets and prose-writers sprang every year from the bosom of the working classes. Those were the days of Reboul de Niines, the hairdresser Jasmin d'Agen, of the carpenter Durand de Fontainebleau; and when the *Ruche Populaire*, the *Atelier*, and the *Fraternité* were crowded with the contributions of learned working men. But now artisans study no longer. The old schools are empty. A master carpenter, who employs 300 workmen, offered a school-room gratuitously, where his workmen might learn geometry, drawing, etc. To attend this school, where they might make themselves perfect workmen, cost them about eighteenpence per month. Fourteen students entered the school for a few days, and then their numbers fell off day by day, until in a short time there was not a single pupil in the room. This sad state of things appears to be general among the Paris working classes; and the race of learned workmen, that once was the glory of France, has almost died

out. There are employers of labour who will not now deny that the present race of indifferent and dissolute workmen are the result of the loosening of the old ties, by which the two great crafts of working men were bound. Isolated, and so, unprotected, the workmen have fallen into the hands of unfair employers, and of rapacious *aubergistes*. They go wandering about without guide, philosopher, or friend ; and with none to tell them where work is abundant, and where it is not to be had. The men who desire to reform the old craft, recall to the memory of their fellow-men that when the craft was omnipotent throughout the tour of France, journeymen and apprentices were easily directed wherever their labour was wanted ; and the craft welcomed the new comers, and saw them well placed with their new masters. Masters and men now treat each other with a rare *sansfaçon*. There are now no longer those feasts and dances, those *pâtes de veille*, which brought employer and employed together. The bond of brotherhood has been sundered that once held all French working men, and gave them ambition, and made them learned in their respective professions.

" Let us reunite the broken link," cries *La Vertu* the *Gavot*, and a short time will prove whether the aristocratic *Devoirants* will meet him half way. The working classes of England will find very admirable and remarkable lessons in the history of these two factions that have endured four centuries and a half.

## CHAPTER III.

The Career of Jeanselme : his Tour of France—The Functions of the Rouleur—The Reception of a New Comer—Speeding the Parting Guest—The Privilege of Cane and Colours—The Four Ancients—The Certificate of Honour—Lorrain-Love-of-Work—The Songsters of the Working Classes—"Long live Tolerance"—Fantastic Trades' Processions.

FEW visitors who know anything of the foremost industries of Paris, can be ignorant of the name of Jeanselme. He became one of the foremost art-manufacturers in Paris. His career is an admirable illustration of the uses to which resolute and studious workmen could put the protection and the instruction, offered by both the *Devoirants* and the *Gavots*, to the young working men of France. On a certain day, now many years ago, a young man, by trade a carpenter, started from Gap, with a staff in his hand and his worldly goods strapped on his back. He was on the road to make the tour of France, and, as a wise precaution at starting, was initiated as an apprentice of the craft of his trade. Let me now set before the reader, in order to illustrate the uses and the customs of the tour of France, under the auspices of the old crafts, the experiences, young Jeanselme must have had when he became a journeyman, settled in Paris, married, and laid the foundation of a great fortune. His first care on

reaching a large town was to inquire for the Mother of his trade—in other words, the house of call, where members of his trade belonging to the craft, assembled and were lodged and boarded. He found there one or two journeymen or apprentices to welcome him with due ceremony ; the bottle of wine with which the arrival of each new-comer was celebrated, appeared, at the expense of the society ; and the young traveller drank and clashed glasses with his new friends. He was then subjected to various questions as to his position in the craft, and his disposition towards it ; and, his answers being satisfactory, he at once found himself provided with work, a bed, and credit for his eating and drinking. The host became his father, the hostess his mother ; the servants and children of the house were his brothers and sisters, and his brother craftsmen were his good friends. It was not his duty to find work for himself ; this was the business of his society. That important functionary, known as the *rouleur*, conducted him into the presence of his new employer. The employer seeing them approach, advanced to meet them ; the three then stood triangularly, and uncovered ; it being agreed on all sides that the employer owed respect to the workman, and that the workmen owed respect to their employer. The employer put five francs into the hands of the *rouleur*, who presented them to the new workman—to young Jeanselme, let us say—with these words :—“ Here is what the *bourgeois* advances you, and I hope that you will earn it.” Young Jeanselme answered that he would not only earn that, but much more. The *rouleur*

and the society which he represented, were answerable for this transaction. Then, the new-comer being fairly put to work, he returned with the *rouleur* to the Mother, and treated him to some light refreshment. The *rouleur* also expected some little pecuniary gratification ; but now his services are entirely gratuitous. The new workman was received into the workshop on equal terms with the oldest of the journeymen of his class. In fact, no employer was informed as to the craft and rank of his workman. All craft distinctions disappeared in the workshop. The best work was necessarily given to the best workman, irrespective of his position under the roof of the Mother. The apprentice when under the roof of the Mother must behave with respect towards his superiors, the journeymen. He must pay the monthly subscription to the society, which ranges between 1 franc and 1½ francs ; he must go through the *gilbrette* with the *rouleur*, and he must attend the monthly meetings.

It is the meeting for the young apprentice's formal reception. The members of the craft assemble in holiday dress at the Mother's. First the journeymen proceed to the reception room, and the apprentices follow. The young man who is about to be received, remains down stairs, alone. Presently the *rouleur* advances, and, taking him by the hand, leads him to the door of the assembly room. The *rouleur* knocks thrice at the door, and it is at once thrown open. The new-comer is introduced ; all the journeymen and apprentices are arranged, standing uncovered, in a circle ; the jour-

neymen wearing their ribbons, the secretary his fringe of gold, and the chief his magnificent scarf. The new-comer walks round a table so that he may see the faces of his future companions, and that they may see his. He is then presented to the chief or captain, by the *rouleur*, as a young man who is anxious to join the society. It is hereupon frankly explained to him that there are two crafts, and that one is as good as the other. He is told that if he has come to the society, in which he finds himself, by mistake, he is still at liberty to retire. The new-comer replies that the society in which he is, is the one in which he wishes to remain. The secretary then reads aloud with great distinctness the rules of the community, so that he knows thoroughly his rights and his obligations. These rules bind all, nobody is to be *tu-toied* at the Mother's. Every member is to be respectful towards his brother member. All quarrelling is to be avoided. When the reading of these very rational rules is over, the captain asks the new member whether he can submit to them. If he cannot, he is still at liberty to withdraw from the society. He replies that he can and will respect these laws; whereupon the *rouleur* conducts him to his place, which is the last, he being the youngest member of the society; and so he is fairly launched on the tour of France.

When he desires to leave the town, and to proceed on his tour of experience, the *rouleur* again accompanies him to his employer. They go through the same form as when they met. They confer, with uncovered heads. The society exacts politeness and

respect on all occasions. The *rouleur* then asks the employer whether the workman who is about to leave him, owes him anything, and has done his duty. The employer having answered in the affirmative, the *rouleur* addresses the same questions to the workman. Has the master done his duty to his workman; and is the workman content with him? It may startle some great English employers to hear that, in France, the most important employers of labour readily and graciously submit to this ceremony. It is an old custom, and it is founded in strict justice. The workman replies that he has no fault to find with the master he is about to leave. It is agreed that each has done his duty, and a formal discharge is given. By this ceremony thousands of quarrels and of frauds have been avoided.

In the evening there is a ceremony to go through at the Mother's. A meeting is held in honour of the departing companion. At this meeting the subject of it sits on the left of the captain or chief, of the society. As a mark of distinction he keeps his hat on, while all the rest of the company are uncovered. He accompanies the *rouleur* down stairs to have an interview with the Mother. This interview is for the purpose of settling accounts. He must obtain a receipt for all he owes. On his return to his place on the left of the president of the meeting, it is publicly stated that he owes nothing down stairs. Then the president, addressing him, says, "If any person here present owes you anything, make your claim." Afterwards, addressing the

society, the president asks the meeting whether any of them have a complaint to make against their departing companion. These queries satisfactorily disposed of, all are good friends, and there are no debts on any side. Every member of the society, whatever his rank may be, is compelled to go through these formalities before he can obtain the society's paper, which recommends him to the care and attention of the first journeyman he finds in the next town to which he is bound. When this paper has been given to the departing one, the friendly bottle at parting is produced and emptied, with due interchange of good wishes. Then all the journeymen and apprentices present, subscribe to show a little hospitality to speed their parting member. Fraternal and joyous songs of the craft are sung. When the moment for departure has arrived, the traveller embraces the Father and Mother and sisters and brothers and friends, and sets forward on his road, accompanied by a few of his intimates and by the *rouleur* of the society. They walk some distance out of the town with him, and then bid him a second adieu, hoping that they may meet again somewhere on the happy tour of France. And so the journeyman speeds on his way from town to town. When Jeanselme, a young and brave workman, so trudged along the roads of France, his society having enjoined him to avoid all quarrelling by the way, it was almost impossible to avoid occasional encounters with the rival craft. At every new town he reached, however, he found another Mother, or father and friends ready to welcome him. His arrival was everywhere the

signal for a little merriment ; his new friends accompanied him about the town to show him its monuments and attractions. He found work ready to his hand ; and, if he wanted it, credit with the Mother. Everywhere is he able to continue his trade studies. He is, of course, subjected to a certain discipline, which, it should be remembered, is self-imposed. This discipline has a good effect upon him. It subjects his actions to the healthy criticism of his fellow-workmen. He is careful not to exceed the bounds of sobriety ; not to quarrel, and not to get into debt. As he acquires knowledge and skill in his trade, he advances from the rank of apprentice to that of journeyman. Then he receives his surname in the craft, and has the privilege of carrying a cane and colours. He is invested with certain dignities among his class, which impose the duty upon him of appearing well before them. He feels that a spur has been put to his ambition ; and he strives incessantly to obtain influence and promotion at the meetings of his craft. He is elected as first journeyman or chief of his society, and this is a great event in his life. The election is conducted in this way :—At a meeting of journeymen and apprentices square pieces of blank paper are distributed. There are three candidates, and each voter—in other words, each person present—writes the name of the candidate for whom he votes, and throws his paper into that urn of the people—a hat. When all present have in this way voted, the papers are withdrawn and read ; and he who has received the largest number of votes, is declared president of the society.

The successful candidate is received with cheers; cheers are given for the retiring president, for the secretaries, for the father, the Mother, and for the society. The president is a great dignitary. He presides at the *fêtes* on Christmas-day, and on the *fête*-day of the trade, on St. Anne's day; he is the chief person at the banquet and the ball, where employers mix, or did mix, with the employed. It is he who places new workmen in workshops; who sees that the departing workman has satisfactorily closed his accounts with his employer; who calls meetings, and often settles disputes between employer and employed. It is his duty to see that all the members of the society have work. He is the adviser and the helper of all. He visits the sick and sees that they are properly cared for; and, in recognition of the performance of these duties, he wears the scarf of honour, which he keeps as a precious relic. A respect for seniority is remarkable in all the transactions of the craft. The four eldest journeymen constitute the committee of each society, and are called the Committee of the Four Ancients. They open all letters, and direct the daily operations of the society, their acts being sanctioned at the monthly general meetings. If difficulties happen in the bosom of the society which the four ancients cannot settle, a meeting of four ancient masters is called. These masters are old journeymen, who have made their tour of France, and have occupied high positions in the society. They are invested by the society with superior authority; and being men of admitted capacity and great experience, their inter-

Vention is generally sufficient to restore order. When, however, their intervention is unsuccessful, a meeting, composed of all the journeymen in the town, is called. If the resolution carried at this meeting cannot be enforced, on account of the insubordination of the young members of the society, a last appeal is made to the fifteen great towns of the tour of France. The decision of a majority of these, decides finally the question at issue. If the disaffected members of the society that has caused all this trouble refuse to submit to the final decision of the towns, a sufficient number of journeymen are despatched from the neighbouring towns to the society in revolt, and its disaffected members are expelled by force.

This strong organization still holds, in spite of many changes and quarrels, a great number of the French working classes together. It compels all its members to be sober, saving, and well behaved. The defaulter and the disturber of the peace have their demerits made known throughout the tour of France. The thief is degraded, and expelled for ever. At the end of six months the first journeyman of his society (we are still supposed to be following in the wake of young Jeanselme) resigns his presidency, folds his scarf of honour carefully up in a box, regulates his accounts with the master, the Mother, and the society, takes his old rank as companion, and sets forth on another stage of his tour of France. His companions march with him in column, singing the favourite songs of their crafts, and beating the measure with their canes. In the days gone by the departing

journeyman was spirited on his way, with the beat of the drum and the sound of the clarion. But this music was found to be too expensive, and now the music comes from the manly throats of the departing journeyman's companions; and so with these ceremonies—again and again renewed—young Jeanselme in his day (like his successors of the present time) must have reached his last town of his tour of France. Jeanselme's last town was Paris, where he settled and married, a simple workman. He lived to amass an immense fortune, as one of the most extensive cabinet-makers in the capital.

When a workman has arrived at his last town, and is about to return home to settle to his trade in his own country; a diploma, ornamented with elaborate designs, and covered with signatures, with the seal of the society attached to it, is given to him. It is called his certificate of honour. This diploma is delivered to him at a great meeting. It is a token of his good conduct, and of the friendship of his fellow-workmen, which he carries home with him, and cherishes under his roof from that time forward. He returns home, after having made his tour of France among friends; having got instruction and protection everywhere on his road. He is twice the workman he was when he set out. He brings back to his family the drawings he has made, the models he has constructed, the colours, the cane, and the scarf he has worn; and, as crown of all, his certificate of honour, in its dazzling frame. All these trifles are so many signs and marks of his good behaviour, and of his hard work. He hangs his certificate up

in his cottage, and it is a guarantee of his probity and industry to all who see it. It is a starting-point exactly like that from which Jeanselme rose to be President of the Prud'hommes, Knight of the Legion of Honour, and a millionaire. M. Jeanselme was proud, it appears, of the craft that helped him on the tour of France; and in the days of his wealth and of his honours, he maintained his old relations with the journeymen carpenters, his ancient colleagues. When he had vast workshops of his own, and employed workmen by the hundred, he remained the simple friend of his old comrades, and behaved like a companion to their successors.

Agricol Perdiguier relates how, in 1860, M. Jeanselme sent to him one of his workmen, known as "Lorrain-Love-of-Work," a journeyman carpenter of the craft, to buy the history of the craft. The ancient journeymen and actual millionaire, being about to retire from business, was anxious to study this history that he might concert measures with the leading children of Solomon, of Jacques, and of Soubise, for the complete harmonious fusion of all their societies into one brotherhood. M. Perdiguier was enchanted with the prospect of shaking hands with this true and powerful friend of his order. But it was not to be. It was on the 4th of November that M. Jeanselme sent for a copy of the history; and on the 11th of the same month he was buried. Perdiguier and Lorrain-Love-of-Work stood together at the brave old workman's grave; and the latter said to his neighbour, "To-morrow we were to have gone together to your house to discuss reforms and pro-

gress with you. The patron looked forward to it as to a holiday." Jeanselme had arranged, having transferred the conduct of his great business to a worthy son, to devote the remainder of his life to the reinstatement of the craft of which he was a noble member, in the esteem of all the working classes in France. He would have journeyed from town to town to summon the rival children of Solomon and of Jacques to shake hands and meet at one fraternal banquet henceforth. But death struck this noble soldier of industry, ere he had shouldered his musket for his last campaign. Had he been spared, he might have done a most useful work among the hundred thousand young workmen who are said to leave their homes every year, to make their tour of France. His voice would have been raised in the midst of this army of workmen, and he would have shown them the regulations of the reformed and consolidated craft, which they might enter, assured that it would be a wise and a faithful protector of their interests, wherever they might go. He would have talked neither of *Devoirants* nor of *Gavots*; nor of the dark days when the children of Solomon sang how they had made puddings with the blood of the *Gavots*; nor of the battle of the Cran, when the field was covered with the slain journeymen. He would have been the Cobden of a league that would have secured protection and prosperity to all classes of French workmen; with Perdiguier for lieutenant; with Vendome, the Key-of-Hearts, for minstrel!

In the struggle for a united order, which is now dragging its slow length along, kept alive by the

In hopefulness and perseverance of a few workers, were tuned the ready harps of many of the light-hearted journeymen of France. The tour of France has always been enlivened by the joyous songs of the travellers, mostly written by the working men themselves. I have a collection of these songs. They celebrate the glories, the uses, and the virtues of the craft. They are highly charged with patriotism, love of the native hamlet, the Mother, and the Mother's wine. They proudly assert the dignity of skill, of probity, and of morality ; which, they insist, are the necessary characteristics of journeymen of the craft. They breathe the gentle spirit of charity, declaring that the craft protects the helplessness of the orphan and of the aged. The journeyman, retired to his native village, after having completed his tour of France, sings of the good his journey has done him. He has lost his roughness ; he has gained good sense and brightness ; he has learned economy ; and, in his little, clean, white house, with his patch of ground, he is happy. He is a person of consideration in his village, and receives the mayor and the curate at his table. In grateful memory of the good fellowship he experienced on his tour of France, he has planted with his own hands an apple-tree, so near the road that the passing workman can pluck the fruit, and refresh his throat on his way. He feels "immense joy" when a passing traveller knocks down two or three of his ruddy apples. And so he lives content. He is brow-bronzed by the sun, but never wrinkled with envy ; and he brings up his son, so that he in his turn may make a happy tour of

France, and achieve a complimentary baptism in the craft.

Some of these songs are exceedingly fresh and picturesque. "The swallow has sung" is a happy roadside song, by Vendôme. Every song has a *refrain* that the journeymen and apprentices, who are welcoming a new companion, or are accompanying a departing one on his journey, may join in chorus, while they keep time with their sticks. "The secrets of their fraternity" celebrates the virtues on which the regulations of the craft are based. The journeyman, who is about to return home, bids his old companions call him should they want him. Although he will be near his father, or in the embrace of his beloved, when they call him he will come. He will pray for a son that he may paint all the virtues of the craft to him. But he will break off the lessons at their call, and at all risks he will come to them! However far removed he may be from them, cradled in the midst of those he adores, still at their call he will come to them!

If the advocates of a general fusion, as I much fear, lack practical upholders; they have stout support, at any rate, in the poets, who sing to fifty different airs the duty of a general union, and the blessings that must flow from it. They describe all the vices and defects which are thrust out of the craft. Among them, according to their poets, there is no desire for wealth; no weakness through intemperance; no laziness over their work; there are no liars; no thieves; no blusterers: the vice of ingratitude is unknown, and arrogance and treachery never dared

even to enter an appearance. "A joyous journeyman," sings that he never fears work, that he likes Burgundy, and, notwithstanding, is no drunkard. He freely confesses to a love of good old wine; and that, in order to obtain it, he works from morning till night; and he holds that the journeyman's chorus should be "Work, wine, and song." A journeyman tanner has been inspired by the solemnity of the eve of a reception into the craft. He invokes the spirit of Truth, and begs that she will fill all hearts with her immense riches. The spirit is conjured to sound the heart of the young apprentice who is about to be received; and to discover to the elders of the society whether he is worthy to come among them. Nearly all these songs have a final verse, in which the author affords his brethren a slight autobiography. Thus, the poet who sings the eve of a reception, in a parting verse makes known to the world the interesting fact that he was born at Agen; that the craft surnamed him Victory, at Bordeaux; that he is a tanner, and the protector of good works. M. Perdiguier's own songs are chiefly about the good time coming. A popular one is written to the air of "Partant pour la Syrie," with "Long live tolerance" for a refrain. Everybody is happy in the new time of universal concord that has come. Fraternal union brings value to the worker. The Mother (Mother Canard) of the journeymen carpenters at Paris has contributed her song to the collection. She sings of the *fête* of St. Joseph, and begs all her children to be good to the unfortunate on their tour of France. The journeymen, not to be behindhand in gallantry, have

strung their harps to sing the praises of Mother Jacob, on her *fête*-day. A journeyman baker is the muse, and he tells mother Jacob that she is the best of mothers, a treasure to the craft ; and that her children must pray that her days shall be long on the earth. These songs, and songs like these, are sung on all kinds of festive occasions. In Paris these *fêtes* are sometimes held on a large scale. The bakers, shoemakers, and carpenters of Paris hold their respective *fête*-days, and sometimes invite journeymen of other societies to a ball. One of the important ones was held in the Rue de Sèvres. The celebration is opened by a banquet, the Mother of the society being placed in the seat of honour. After the banquet, songs of the craft are sung, and sometimes the Mother deigns to lead off the musical part of the festivity. About nine o'clock large numbers of invited guests arrive. These guests consist of journeymen of various trades, in their holiday clothes, and carrying their colours ; accompanied with their wives and daughters, also in holiday guise. The managers of the *fêtes* distribute *immortelles* to the adepts of the various societies. The ball is opened and continued with great spirit till midnight. The journeymen carpenters, locksmiths, weavers, shoemakers, bakers, are all mingled together with the colours of their respective societies. They are so many old enemies become brothers.

Perdiguier cried with joy to see the sight at midnight. All these journeymen formed an immense chain that reached round the ball-room ; and in the centre, alone, stood the Mother, decorated with the white scarf, ornamented with the square and

compasses. Then Pretty-Heart-of-Salernes recited a composition of his own, in praise of unity. Afterwards the Joy-of-Grenoble sang a song in honour of labour. Then a well-known journeyman, with a stentorian voice, sang the last song Vendôme-the-Key-of-Hearts wrote before he died. This song was received with tremendous cheering. Every man shook his neighbour by the hand, and then the ball was reopened with greater animation than ever. The Mother walked majestically about in her white robe, and with her crown of flowers, like a queen in the midst of loving subjects. Pressed to sing her well-known song, she raised her voice, and 500 or 600 journeymen hung on the honey of her lips. The chorus was taken up by everybody in the room, and was again and again repeated; for the Mother had sung that, should France be in danger, her children would be strong enough to drive out the enemy. Then the Mother coquettishly asked who would be the *cantinière*, and would carry the brandy barrel? And the 600 journeymen shouted in reply—

“ C'est la Mère, c'est la Mère,  
La Mère des compagnons !”

Something after this model are the *fêtes* of all the societies of workmen in Paris, even down to the present time; nor have some of the more important societies lost the old ambition of having learned workmen among them. It was only on the 19th of January 1862, that 150 journeymen (*Devoirants*) met at the house of the Mother, 51, Boulevard de Strasbourg, to carry in triumph to the railway station the monument of a fellow-workman's genius, skill, and

learning. It was a learned carpenter's *chef-d'œuvre*, and it had been exhibited under the roof of the Mother, to every carpenter in Paris. It was the production of the learned carpenter Champagne, and was now to start on the tour of France, to be admired in every town where the craft had a meeting-place. Here the *Devoirants* and the *Gavots* were met together on friendly terms, and in holiday clothes, to carry a masterpiece of their trade, with all honour, through the streets of Paris, to the Tours Railway station. Four young journeymen carried the work on their shoulders, and before them, at the head of a column of mingled *Gavots* and *Devoirants*, marched, arm-in-arm, the *Devoirant*, Champagne, and the *Gavot*, Agricol Perdiguier. The workmen who are still the stanch supporters of the old craft, and who desire to see all the working classes of their country united in one great society, answer, when prosaic people laugh at these processions : "At any rate, they keep us together ; they protect the rising generation of workmen against the dangers and privations of the working journey round France. They keep men honest ; they preserve the dignity of the workmen ; and they are outward manifestations of the strength of the mass, that is welded together to protect the weakness of the individual." This subject has been dismissed with mockery by a number of light French writers, who have not looked deeply into it, but have been content to eliminate a sorry joke or two out of the fantastic trades' processions of the old time. The Revolution that destroyed the corporations, could not destroy the crafts of working men ; the reason being

that these crafts had their strong *raison d'être*. The jocular writers are thrown into fits of laughter when they see the journeymen with his ribbon, the president with his scarf, and the workman's poet with his white rosette of honour; yet the chief of the State finds no impediment in the modesty of these gentlemen, when he expresses a desire to decorate their button-holes with a bit of red ribbon. Have not the *savans* of the Institute recourse to the tailor for the laurels they show to the world? Do not heads, reputed to be very wise indeed, scheme and plan directly death has lifted a green coat out of one of the forty arm-chairs? These very wise heads will answer that the contest is not for the coat. The coat is merely the outward and visible sign of the fact that the wearer occupies one of these forty seats of honour. And so the supporters of working men's crafts and fellowships reply, when their scarves and colours are treated with derision. "These colours are but the symbols of the honours we have won in the workshop, or by acts of devotion to our fellow-men; or by the songs in which we have stimulated them to lead the lives of industrious and Christian men!"

## BOOK IV.

### POPULAR OPINIONS AND LITERATURE—CONCLUSION.

#### CHAPTER I.

Furnishing a Régime—*Cités-Ouvrières*—Mother Marré—Father Moscou—Count Madet's Speculation—The Dearness of Lodgings—Jules Simon.

WHEN Napoleon III. was Prince-President of the French Republic, he saw the importance of satisfying the demands of the working classes of Paris. He knew full well that misery and hunger had accomplished the downfall of Louis Philippe, and that a French ruler, to be comfortable and secure on his throne, must be popular in the Quartier St. Antoine. He set to work accordingly. While rival theorists were debating about the rights of labour, he gave work to be done, and placed himself at the head of every practical scheme for bettering the condition of the working classes. The excited crowds that had poured out of the national workshops, must be kept quiet, by being kept at work. While the 87,000 workmen who had been employed with the money of the State, were casting about for settled employment, after the horrible days of June; the power was rising that was destined to give them prosperity; it was rising even against their will (they had posted on the walls of Paris their determi-

nation to have neither emperor nor king). With the advent to power of the present ruler of France, came prosperity to the working classes of Paris. All the manufacturers of fantastic luxuries set to work, encouraged by the crowds of new celebrities created by the Second Empire. Paris had to furnish, as I have observed, not a new hotel nor a new palace, but a new *régime*. The last reign had been one of mean thrifit, in a city devoted to the manufacture of articles of luxury. The chief of the Second Empire saw the mistake of such a policy ; his must be a spendthrift reign. Great works were planned, magnificent imperial orders were given, and regiments of beggars on horseback announced that they would ride only thorough-breds. It was recorded that the appearance of a second Napoleon on the scene of European politics, had at once created a great rise in the price of diamonds. The Quartier St. Antoine became busy. The stone-masons had their work cut out for them for years. The old frippery of the Bourbon *garde-meuble* would not do for imperial splendour. M. Berryer now holds up the startling list of debts which France has contracted under the Second Empire ; but he makes no sensation, for many of the debts have been contracted in purchasing new glory, and in developing those fanciful industries in which the workmen of Paris excel. The workmen of Paris one and all complain that their wages are low. But they can live by their work ; and they feel that, while the Second Empire lasts, work will never wholly fail them. It is the policy of the Emperor to identify his name with the glory and prosperity of France.

He has always shown that he comprehends the importance to a ruler, of great works, and the employment of vast masses of workmen. The Imperial Loan Society, which I have elsewhere described, is evidence of the sagacity with which the Emperor has read the minds of his subjects of the working classes. The anxiety with which he has caught at the various plans which have been submitted to him for improving the dwellings of the Paris working classes, shows that he has watched with considerable apprehension, the great rise of house rent all over Paris. He has greatly improved the sanitary condition of his capital, and he has turned an official eye on insalubrious lodgings. The most difficult task, however, that had to be fulfilled, was that of creating new working men's lodgings that could be let as cheaply as the old ones. Many attempts have been made to solve this difficult problem, the construction of Cité-Ouvrière being the most notable.

The idea of establishing working men's *cités*, or colonies, is not of recent date. It first attracted the attention of influential men in France, immediately after the Revolution of February. In 1851 a very large working man's *cité* was completed at Marseilles. This *cité* consists of one long building three stories high, and includes something under 150 rooms, opening on long common corridors. The rooms are let furnished, and the highest rent appears not to exceed 5s. per month. This *cité* is for the use of male lodgers exclusively. The bedrooms are simply and cleanly furnished, with an iron bedstead, a table, two chairs, a cupboard, etc. There is a

spacious refectory in the house, where the lodgers can obtain their meals at very moderate prices. Water is laid on all over the house. There is a doctor attached to the establishment, who gives gratuitous advice and medicines, to the lodgers. Hot baths are to be had for 2½d. M. Audiganne reports that notwithstanding these advantages and the care with which the establishment was kept, it was found difficult to persuade working men to take up their lodgings in it; and by this time I have no doubt that it is filled, not with working men for whom it was originally intended, but with members of that large shabby-genteel class that so greedily pounces upon everything that is cheap. Where this class appears, the working man is not to be found.

The idea of *cités*, especially of *cités* for the working classes, was extremely popular some fifteen years ago. Monumental colonies for working men were to have been erected in the then twelve arrondissements of Paris, and 6,000,000 francs were to have been expended on the work. The Prince-President of the Republic was a munificent supporter of the great plan; but, as the Swedes have it, if "it rose like a star, it fell like a pancake." It was found possible to build one *cité* for working men, and one only. That *cité*, now known all over Paris as the Cité Napoléon, figures in the map of the capital as a large building at the corner of the Rues Rochechouart, and Pétrelle. It cost in the building, £26,000. This colony consists of four stacks of buildings, which together contain about 170 separate lodgings. Baths and wash-houses belong to

the establishment. It might most unquestionably have been said of the lodgings to be had in this colony, that they were in all respects superior to any lodgings in the capital to be had at the same rent. The staircases are spacious and airy. The houses are solidly built, and well adapted to the purpose for which they were planned ; nevertheless, the speculation has not been proved good enough to tempt builders to risk money in new *cités*. The working men have not taken kindly to these neat lodgings under regulations, that affect their liberty of action. They will not be under the control of any administration whatever. They are quite alive to the advantages which these model rooms offer to their families ; but they do not care to have water laid on in their sitting-room, at the expense of their independence. They prefer to drag it up to the garret, under the tiles, where full liberty is "wealthy with a crust." M. Audiganne declares his experience to be, after a hundred discussions with working men on the subject, that they will not give their moral support to a general system of working men's colonies. If these colonies are on a large scale, they must necessarily come under certain rules and regulations to be made in the interests of order and of health. These regulations displease the working men. They say—"We are all day long in severely regulated workshops under masters and overseers, where we have to avoid fines and other punishments ; and you wish us, when we escape in the evening from the workshop, to go to a home, on the door of which you have pasted another series of regulations which we

are bound to obey. You want to give us another master, to be called chief of the colony ; so that we shall no longer have authority even at our own fire-sides. We have enough of administrations and regulations, and papers and *livrets*, out of doors and in the workshop ; and at home we will have none of these. Here we will continue to enjoy privacy and independence. We will not inhabit a number in an endless corridor ; we will not enter barracks." While these over-regulated *cités* are regarded by the well-to-do working classes with decided disfavour, large establishments like that kept by Mother Marré, near the busy works of the Faubourgs du Temple and St. Martin, for the accommodation of the poorest class of workmen, flourish. Of this establishment and its origin, that famous miner in the dark undergrounds of Paris, Privat d'Anglemont, has given a most amusing description.

The husband of Widow Marré was an old soldier of the imperial army. After the peace, when many of the scattered soldiers, of Bonaparte, having laid aside their arms, were earning a crust for their old age, by following little barrier trades of all descriptions — when heroes of the Old Guard were selling cakes and songs and lucifer matches at the *barrières*, Marré drew around him the scattered atoms of the imperial glory of France. Under the old soldier's roof these veterans fought their battles again, and drank and disputed. Death has now put the tongues of most of these old soldiers to rest, and *Sabreur Marré* himself has " his martial cloak around him." His "disconsolate widow" carries on the

business. She is tired of the glories of the Grand Army, and will not have Austerlitz talked about in her presence. I suspect that the late *Sabreur Marré* gave his spouse more than enough on this exciting topic. She is now entirely devoted to the peaceful duties of a lodging-house keeper, and sits at the entrance of her dilapidated kingdom, watching the exits and the entrances of her strange lodgers. These are amenable to no rules. They would not enter a *cité ouvrière* if its salubrious apartments were offered to them at one sou per diem. Imagine Father Moscou, with regulations pasted upon his chamber-door! Regulations, forsooth; he answers Widow Marré's applications for rent, with a jest and a song! She calls him an old wine-barrel, and threatens to hold back his key until he pays. Moscou is seventy, but he answers these threats with gallant flirtations. He calls the Widow Marré, the cream of good women. He asks her to think for a moment what she could do without her old Moscou. The subject of dispute is only a balance of ten sous against the old lodger, but the widow knows her customers too well to give them long credit. Moscou is a favoured one, having been an intimate friend of the late *sabreur*.

Between a large lodging-house like that of the Widow Marré, and a *cité ouvrière* as designed by the authorities, there is a wide distinction. Madame Marré gives herself no airs of the philanthropist who is bent upon improving the condition of the poor people with whom she comes in contact. She has one object, and one only, in life; and that is to make as much money as possible out of the poorest

of the poor. Establishments like hers flourish, because the landlords thereof are as independent and straightforward as the tenant; while *cités ouvrières* fail one by one, because the people who direct them have not limited themselves strictly to the duties of landlords. The Cité Napoléon is now a busy place enough, but it is no longer what its founders intended it to be. No appearance of the *cité* with its model ranges of lodgings, is left. The dominant industry of the place appears to be gasfitting. On passing under the high gateway that is covered with announcements of trades carried on within, the visitor sees, not a vast model lodging-house, but spacious premises where carpenters and others carry on their business. Round the corner in the Rue Pétrelle, there is an entrance to some work-people's baths and wash-houses, the only remaining indication of the original plan of the *cité*. Here, for a few sous, workwomen can have all the appliances and means for washing the family linen, and for bathing themselves and their children. This establishment appears to flourish. It is free from the objections which the working classes of Paris make to *cités ouvrières*. At the corner of the Rue Pétrelle, opposite the famous *cité*, there is a low little lodging-house, where *garnis* for workmen are to be let. The house is, on the ground-floor, the place of business of a fifth-rate *rôtisseur*, where the odour of boiling fat perfumes the air round about. A peep into the dark and greasy ground-floor rooms at once suggests to the reflective mind an idea of what the bedrooms that are to be let upstairs, must be. They

could no more bear comparison with the worst rooms of the Cité Napoleon opposite, than the delicacies of the ground-floor *rôtisseur* could bear comparison with the daily show of delicacies made by Chevet. Yet the rooms over the *rôtisseur's* pans of boiling grease, the windows of which do not appear to be much larger than the palm of a ploughman's hand, pay, I am certain, good interest to the landlord.

Jules Simon, in his speech made to the deputies of the Corps Législatif, on the 19th of last January, touched on most of the grievances of the French working classes, and made particular reference to work men's lodgings. He recommended to the attention of the Imperial Government, the duty of at once taking measures to improve the lodgings of the industrial classes. He confessed that he did not like the system on which the *cités ouvrières* was based. He did not desire to see working men quartered apart from the rest of the population. The working men should live in the midst of, and mingle with, the rest of the community. The experience of those who have had to deal with the insalubrious dwellings of Paris supports M. Simon's belief, that the class which lives by the labour of its hands, will not be swept into corridors and common rooms, and be subject to an administration, like the inmates of an orphan asylum. I believe that M. Simon alluded to the speculation of Count Madré, when he said that a landlord had conceived the happy idea of building a number of houses in the Rue de la Chopinette, consisting of well-arranged rooms, where workmen could make a comfortable home, paying a rent

of only £10 per annum. The Count's speculation has proved, I am told, a very successful one. Its success will possibly be a lesson to the authorities, who are building new boulevards in every quarter, apparently on the assumption that no families will pretend to live in the pleasure capital who have not at least £500 per annum. The working population will be only too glad to locate themselves in decent and healthy rooms, when these are offered to them at a price within their means, and on conditions that in no way affect their independence. M. Simon insists that the Government should take the question of cheap lodgings into their consideration at once. It is one, he urges, in which the moral welfare of the artisan is concerned as much as his physical welfare. The toiler who has been slaving during twelve hours in some dark and murky workshop, and whose home is in some squalid windy garret, has not the courage to refuse the voices of his friends who call him to spend his evenings, where there is a cheerful fire burning, in the curtained *cabaret*. A comfortable home is the best counter-attraction to the wine-shop. Up to the present time, however, I cannot see any important signs of coming improvement in the dwellings of the Paris industrial classes. The effect of all the Paris improvements is to scatter them far and wide, so that year after year workmen will sleep farther away from their work. This may be good strategy as far as the Government is concerned. It may tend to prevent civil commotions, by keeping the elements of them thinly spread over a wide surface; but it is a cruelty to the working classes

themselves. They already complain, with the bitterness of men who are suffering, of the miles they have to walk to their work in the morning, and from their work in the evening. If they had the liberty they desire, and their best friends desire for them, they would quickly discover a system that would give them healthy and independent lodging, within a reasonable distance of their place of work.

In a debate in the Corps Législatif on the condition of the French working classes, and on the laws that were necessary to their content and to their prosperity, M. Darimon reminded the Chamber that French working men no longer put faith in Government leading-strings. All they ask now from "the powers that be" is to give them liberty of action, that they may be able to maintain their own rights with their own energy. The boon they crave, before all things, is that they may be left to work out their own regeneration. Give them liberty, say the Opposition deputies, that they may form themselves into committees, and, by their collective force, that they may be enabled to obtain fair wages for their labour. Give them the right of meeting, and they will forthwith mould themselves into credit and co-operation associations like those of England and Germany. The working men of Paris and of Lyons have heard of all the advantages that have accrued to English working men from their co-operation stores, and the Frenchmen demand the liberty that will enable them to enjoy the fruits of co-operation, like their English brethren. Without the right of meeting, masses of working men are so many helpless atoms. They are

at the mercy of rapacious employers, rapacious landlords, and rapacious tradesmen. They are underpaid for their work; and then, again, their insufficient wages are wasted in undue payments for rent and food. It would not be difficult to convince the intelligent working men of Paris of the enormous advantages they would derive from the adoption of the English building society system; but they could not possibly adopt this system in the present state of the law with regard to them. The Imperial Government pretend that the present law on coalitions was framed for the benefit of the artisans; and, in order to give a colour of truth to this pretence, they cunningly confound coalition with intimidation. They say that it is in order to protect the individual workman against the tyranny of a committee or a meeting of his trade, that the law against coalition was established. This is disingenuous. No working man desires to see that part of the law which protects him against intimidation, when he chooses to work at a less price than his neighbour, abrogated. In England, where workmen have the right of meeting, the oppression of the individual by the mass, is punished. What the working men of Paris demand is, that they shall have the right to meet, and to debate and arrange the question of wages. They claim a second chamber of Prud'hommes, that shall consist half of employers and half of employed, and that shall arrange tariffs of wages. They demand neither to intimidate nor to coerce their fellow-men. They seek the right of meeting, not in order to harm one another, but to protect and

elevate one another. The Government point to all they have done for the working classes. It is true that since the Revolution of 1848 laws have been passed organizing the purchase of annuities for old age; appointing authorities to visit insalubrious dwellings; establishing baths and wash-houses, and mutual benefit societies; and giving £400,000 to the improvement of the dwellings of the working classes in great cities. These are all useful acts; but, important as they are, they weigh as nothing in the balance against the right of meeting which the working men now claim. M. Simon does not allow the Imperial Government to blind the eyes of the public to the limit which the workmen voluntarily put on the liberty they demand. They pretend to a right of meeting in order to regulate a fair rate of wages, and to agree among one another on a rate at which they will all work. They do not want a law that shall put a minority under the thumb of a majority. They desire entire liberty for their fellow-workmen who will not agree with them. Their object--and it is a laudable one--is to come to a general understanding among themselves on their mutual interests; on the attitude they should adopt towards their employers, and on the benefits they can confer one upon the other, by co-operation and association. Again and again the Government parried the home-thrusts of the Opposition. M. de Parieu, vice-president of the Council of State, was agreed with the Opposition that a workman should be free to work or not work--that is, to accept or reject the wages offered to him--but he should not

be permitted to prevent others from accepting the wages he had rejected. Nothing could be more unfair than this manner of meeting the Opposition, since they never suggested for one moment, that the working classes of France desired a law that would empower them to intimidate their fellow-workmen. Some modification of the existing law is, however, just carried ; and the modification will loosen a little the present bondage of French working men. But there is little hope for their free action just now. They will not be allowed to help themselves. They desire to establish mutual benefit societies of all kinds, under the government of their own order. They are not ignorant, as I have already said, of what the English working classes have done, and what they promise to do. The Government will not willingly give up its paternal character. It will readily set on foot any combination that is shown to be for the benefit of the labouring millions, provided always that it keeps the upper hand in every such combination. The working men, on the other hand, are tired of this tutelage ; and so they are likely to remain for the present uneasy and dissatisfied ; and in Paris, at any rate, opposed to the Government that will not treat them as rational men. They are opposed, for instance, as I have already shown, to these *cités ouvrières* ; in the first place, on the ground that their social liberty is not complete in them ; and in the second place, because these *cités* are under Government patronage, and, consequently, under Government surveillance. The men would take to cheap and healthy lodgings where

they were allowed to govern themselves, or where the speculation was one of private individuals. The success of Count Madre's experiment shows that the working classes of Paris are not blind to the advantages of cheap and healthy lodgings. M. Simon said, in his speech to which I have already alluded, that he was appalled as he contemplated the architectural splendours of the *façades* of the interminable new boulevards. M. Simon is a sound authority on the actual condition, and on the prospects, of the working class of his nation. His book on French workwomen was the ripe fruit of long experience. He wrote of that which he had seen, and of opinions which he had heard from the "sufferers' own lips." He had travelled to the chief industrial centres of France; he had visited the wretched homes of the workmen of Paris; and on all sides he said that home was losing its holy influence among the masses, and that, consequently, the working race was degenerating. To re-establish the home of the working man, by putting comfort and the graces of education within his reach, was, he concluded, the first duty of the French social reformer. He is appalled, and not irrationally, as he surveys these gorgeous boulevard *façades*, because he knows that behind their architectural beauties there has been no thought about a home for the courageous and skilful men who have built them. The voice he raised in the Legislative Assembly, of which he is one of the most thoughtful and conscientious members, was directed to this the most threatening evil of the present day, in Paris. It was really lamentable to see the little

effect with which a man of his authority spoke. His audience did not appear to see, or it may be would not see, the importance of his warning ; yet it is impossible to overrate the gravity of this question of rents—of this Paris mania for luxury and palatial buildings, that is day by day driving not only the absolutely poor, but all people of small income, into the most abominable holes and corners. The dearness of lodgings is a constant subject of conversation everywhere. People find themselves driven on an Irishman's journey through a house—that is, from the first floor to the attics of it. The ingenuity with which families of decent position are packed, would awaken the admiration of the late Mr. Wackford Squeers. When this pressure is put upon the middle classes, the condition of the working community must be, as M. Simon assures us it is, alarming. The lodgings of the working classes in London are bad enough ; but when we compare their situation and their condition with the situation and condition of those inhabited by the families of Paris operatives, we are no longer surprised that when delegates from French trades visited London in 1862, they were struck with the general comfort they saw. London improvements have not the exterior beauty of those of Paris ; indeed, it would be ridiculous to attempt any comparison between them. But, at least, the new arteries that have been made in the British metropolis, have been designed chiefly for the ventilation and for the convenience of the inhabitants. It has often been said by ambitious architects, that London requires the presence of an absolute sovereign, of the Bonaparte

type, for two years. He would build us boulevards, and lay out our great sites to the best advantage. Jules Simon would answer these gentlemen by saying, "I repeat, with the authority of great experience, that a great city, which includes an enormous population of men and women, who earn low wages, should not be dealt with in utter disregard of their wishes and their necessities." To men who know the population of Paris, and the hard lives tens of thousands lead, the lines of palaces that have been pushed through the poor quarters on the south side of the Seine, are monstrous lumps of wickedness. The workmen who raise them, look upon them in dismay. The poor people on the sites of whose houses they are built shift their humble household gods farther out of the wicked city, and wonder when the powers that rear these palaces, will think of them and their little ones. While these great works go forward year after year, the poor working classes are driven closer and closer together in the still fewer and fewer tenements that are left for their use. The Home, as M. Simon most truly and effectively observes, continually suffers, and every day the workman is more tempted than he was yesterday, to obey the friends who call him to spend his evenings by the cheery fire, and behind the red curtains of the *cabaret*.

To the list of men who have striven earnestly to provide healthy and cheap homes for the working classes of Paris, the name of M. Puteaux (himself, once a working carpenter), who built, who created Batignolles, should be added. He died, in April last,--regretted by thousands.

## CHAPTER II.

The *Bulletin du Librairie*—Cheap Literature—The “Brain of France”—Madelon—The “Little Journal”—Timothée Trimm—A Book-stall in the Passage Jouffroy—A French Description of a London Execution—M. Jaeglé—Bound and Unbound Books.

BOOKS, as a rule, are published at a lower price in France than in England. Let me take the last number of the *Bulletin du Librairie*, for a few examples. Cousin’s “History of Philosophy,” an octavo volume of 567 pages, is published at 7 francs; a dictionary of the communes of France, with a map—a book of 740 „pages—costs  $3\frac{1}{2}$  francs; Amédée Achard’s new novel, which contains about as much matter as an English two-volume novel that is sold at a guinea, is advertised in two volumes at 6 francs; while Paul Féval’s story, in two volumes, of 433 pages each, is sold at the same price. The classics and all educational books are marked at prices that put them within the reach of all. The best authors have been put forth in twopenny-halfpenny volumes. Cheap editions of every popular author’s works abound. Messrs. Hachette and Co. appear to send forth volumes of their railway library by the score, and to desire to include in it, translations of the works of every known modern author. They have issued admirable editions, in two-franc volumes, of Molière, Corneille,

Montaigne, Pascal, Voltaire, and Rousseau. They have familiarized large masses of French readers with the best romance writers of England, Germany, and Russia. Their library editions are only half-crown volumes, yet they are admirably printed, and worthy of place on the shelves of the most fastidious book collector. Then there is the great pamphlet publisher, Dentu, who issues from time to time, with great flourish of trumpets, revelations that pretend to have a very high origin indeed. He rarely asks more than two or three francs for any of the startling works that he puts forth. There is the busy Librairie Nouvelle on the Boulevards, with the equally busy Librairie Centrale opposite to it. The temporary volumes which are cast forth from these establishments, and from the offices of the other cheap Parisian publishers, would astonish even Messrs. W. H. Smith and Co., of London. Alexander Dumas alone would occupy the entire time of one ordinarily active publisher. But here his copious stream is swallowed up by being divided among all the popular publishers. Special publishers, like Messrs. Guillaumin and Co., are not less remarkable than the distributors of light literature, for the cheapness of their books. Political histories and treatises, and heavy works on political economy, that in England would be beyond the reach of a poor man's purse, are by them placed within the means of every student. Again, law books are not marked at prices that limit their sale to the rich. I have before me a complete and most comprehensive treatise on commercial law in France, extending over 500 pages of close print, and its cost is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  francs.

The cheap literature of France, then, includes its best and its worst authors. It comprehends Montaigne, Pascal, Paul de Kock, and the younger Dumas. Millions of these tenpenny volumes are spread every year over the country. But these volumes, be it observed, are not for the poor. They feed the intellectual craving of the immense middle class of limited fortunes that is spread over the empire. They are made, apparently, to be read and thrown away; for a collection of them, or of thirty or forty of them, is seldom or never to be seen in a French *ménage*. The *bourgeoise* has a few thumbed and tattered romances, the leaves hanging together by frail strings, which she will exchange with a friend for another volume equally dilapidated. But a neat shelf or two of books can seldom be seen even in the most comfortable middle-class *ménage*. Books, indeed, appear to rank with amusing newspapers. They are seldom or never bound. It is true that not one in fifty is worth binding, and it is a pity that nineteen out of every twenty were ever written. The point, however, which strikes an Englishman with astonishment in this capital, which its children call the head and centre of civilisation, and which a deputy described lately in the Legislative Chamber as the brain of France, is that nobody appears to read the classics of his country, nor to care about having a moderate collection of them; although they are to be bought cheap enough at any book-stall. People talk about Montaigne, and Molière, and Racine, and Boileau, but they never appear to read them. Any smattering modern Frenchmen have of their best

authors they have retained from their school days. It is in the nature of Parisians of all classes of the present day to

“Touch and go, and sip the foam of many lives.”

The few students among them, and the serious examiners of the tendencies of the time in which they live, deplore incessantly the direction of the incline down which the mind of the young generation is moving. It is indeed lamentable even to run over the list of titles of the books, which are the daily literary food of all the middle and upper class young men of France. Morals, baser than those which Chesterfield preached to his son, are not even redeemed by the advocacy of the manners of a dancing-master. An intolerable and insolent levity, when dealing with things sacred and good, lightens the teaching. It appears to be the mission of the novelist to perfume the stews. He brings upon his tawdry scene, figures that should never meet the sight of honest men and women. He presents in his first page, a school-girl in the May morning of her existence. No rude hand has yet brushed a dew drop from the rose leaves of her maiden life. The world and she are strangers. She loves God and her parents, and perhaps a schoolfellow or two, who are as guileless as herself. We linger over the picture, wondering at the power of the hand that has drawn so much sweetness, and we read on. Not many chapters have passed under our eyes, before we are made acquainted with company we trust the school-girl may never even know by name. We shall be grievously disappointed. The school-girl is to be of

this company, and the gayest and the boldest of it. She is to lose all maidenly grace, and to be of the rank and file of vice that is brigaded along the Boulevards. She was drawn pure in the beginning only that she might stand in bold relief. When the artist desires to darken the shadows in a corner, he puts a white light near it; the novelist begins by lifting his heroine out of the mud, and setting her in the midst of the splendid furniture of vice. And forthwith he maunders over her, wipes away the rouge, hushes the brazen laugh, and, for softness, gives the courtezan a cough. Again, his readers want a hearty laugh: enter Rigolboche. It is always the same company that acts. The *mise-en-scène* is varied only by a redistribution of the furniture. The air has the same rank odour in it; and so, day by day, the young Frenchman gets his morals and his wit, fresh from the private supper-rooms of the Boulevards. No reader who has had an opportunity of studying, or has been compelled to study, the recent literature of France, will say that this description of the popular romance now in vogue, is overdrawn. I do not include in this picture, it is obvious, the writings of men like Lamartine, Hugo, De Vigny, and others of their rank. The class of fiction which is the *pièce de résistance* of the young French mind is in all respects admirably represented by one of the recent additions to it--namely, Edmond About's "Madelon." While a book like this is enjoyed in the *salon*, what kind of literature can we expect to discover in the kitchen and the *concierge's* box? When this is the study of the closet, what is likely to be the scene on the

stage? What say M. About's countrymen; are these charges proved? When the Citizen King was in mid-career, were Frenchmen and Frenchwomen the *coquins* and *coquines* which the author of "Madelon" paints? The pens of modern French writers have left us little to imagine of the easy pleasures, the easy morals, the easy tongues, and the hard lives of fashionable Paris. The heroines of French romance are generally married women, who live away from home. The heroes are noisy *roués*, dashed with sentiment, and either rolling in wealth or starving in alleys. When the heroine is not married, she ought to be; that is, she ought to be, according to the dull notions of country-folk and grandmothers. But there does not appear to be the slightest reason why she should put down her pony-equipage, deprive herself of her suppers, her cards, and her company of bankers, counts, and princes, and settle into the commonplace respectability of married life, while her credit—that is, her pecuniary credit—is good in Paris. The jewellery is from Froment-Maurice; from whom else should it be? Can Dame Honesty, with all her airs, her toss of the head and disdainful eyes, surpass the elegance of Madelon's robe, or the taste of her pony-equipage? Honesty owns that she cannot even keep pace with Madelon. Madelon is the rage. Wives and mothers rumble along the Champs-Elysées in their quiet carriages, and bite their lips when they see husbands and brothers and sons scrambling round the well-known blue pony-phacton. There was a time when Madelon, shame-faced, seldom ventured from her hiding-

place. Husbands, brothers, and sons, who were among her acquaintances, hushed her name when modest women were by; and now men find Madelon's carte-de-visite in their sister's album! Madelon is not a creation of to-day nor of yesterday; but it was only yesterday that she boldly presented herself to the world, and that wives and mothers raised their opera-glasses, to see whether she was still wearing the scapegrace's diamonds. She laughed in their teeth, and she is laughing still, the hollow laugh that runs through the two repulsive volumes before us. Let us hasten to add, that M. About's work is always skilful, and in some places masterly. There was a picture in the Paris Exhibition of 1855; the subject, a man burnt to death in his room. The roasted flesh was falling from his bones; the man's skull, charred, veined with red and glazed as with the sweat of his final agony, was a horror that could not be easily chased from the mind. The force and skill of the artist were unquestionable, and he had produced a scene that would make a coroner sicken. M. About has filled a canvas with fifty figures as horrible as that repulsive *chef-d'œuvre*. We have a menagerie of wild beasts in patent-leather boots. A few gentle and noble-hearted creatures show their noses, but they are speedily seized and rubbed in the dirt.

Life in the capital and in the provinces is described as alike base and heartless. One or two figures of old-fashioned virtue peep through the fumes of town champagne and country beer; but the sots laugh at them and triumph over them. A creature soiled

and worn as a cabman's glove, puts a family of saints to the rout.

M. About has exhausted the witchery of his palette in painting Madelon. We are presented with a lily, against the whiteness of which snow becomes amber. We approach feasting our eyes upon the incomparable flower, and behold ! the author with a laugh, shows us a toad in the cup. The younger M. Dumas' Lady with the Camellias would not sit at the same table with Madelon. Madelon is not a *fille de marbre*, she is a *fille de boue*. About her we find a gallery of sensual rascals. Even for the Baron of Guernay, a noble bumpkin, we have but a slender share of pity, since he is party to an ignoble plot. The reader is in bad company directly he has opened the first volume. The bad company are, it is true, in high places : they dispose of millions ; they occupy lofty positions. One or two hold up a rag which they call honour, and look down with superb disdain on the *canaille*, but the best of them are sorry specimens of gentlemen of any school or time.

The story is without beginning or end. We meet the heroine in all the gaudy splendour of successful *lorette-life* ; and her splendour has not left her when we part from her. She passes through twenty fires, and not a hair is scorched. Her companions fall like moths from a candle, but she makes her bow at last, lovelier than when she first appeared on the scene. Heartless herself, she can break any heart. The noblest and most virtuous are not proof against her witcheries. She can make the miser open his coffers, and bless her while she casts the gold that was his

life-blood out of window. The most exemplary son and husband will leave his aged mother, his good wife, and the children whom he adores, when she chooses to beckon. She is on the books of the police, and her adorers know it, and follow her still, like slaves. Public men become corrupt to please her. All her slaves are worldly men, whose selfishness is revolting : they all show themselves capable of various degrees of roguery, but the infamy of none is so successful as hers. The Prince of Armagne is a dashing sensualist, with gleams of good in him ; and he is the only moderately reputable man who appears in the path of Madelon. But he entices her, out of vengeance, to dupe Jeffs, the miser and heartless discounter. This *fine fleur*, this gallant knight, helps Madelon to pass herself off as an orphan of a noble and irreproachable house, and trap the dirty and repulsive usurer of Frauenbourg into a marriage, by means of forged papers obtained by the help of officials who have been her favourites. The Baron of Guernay—whose life at home is the only wholesome bit of reading in the two volumes, with its picturesque plenty, quiet and hospitality—is in the plot to palm off an old courtezan on an unpleasant neighbour, as the spotless daughter of an ancient house ; so that we have no pity for the Baron when he, in his turn, is snared and ruined by the presence of Madelon as Madame Jeffs, at Frauenbourg.

It would be difficult to obtain a companion-picture to M. About's portrait of Champion. He is an eminently successful man. He reaches the apex of the pyramid, as the lizard reaches it. He begins life

as a fawning sycophant, and cheats the public so dexterously that he wins a Professor's chair, where he shines as a moral philosopher—the said philosopher putting his tongue in his cheek while the crowd applaud the virtue he has clothed with so much eloquence. He wins an heiress, whom he fools; and she goes to the grave believing him to be the best of men. She leaves him all her fortune, and with it he makes his way to Parliament. Then he cheats his profligate nephew Gérard out of his heritage, and thrusts him aside as *sous-préfet* of Frauenbourg. The old *malin* is, all this time, a model of the virtues—to the world. He is corrupt—he is a dexterous contriver of bubble companies—his soul is given to the worship of Mammon. He begrudges himself a new hat until he meets Madelon, when he dyes his hair, and takes a valet, and spreads a cloth of gold at her feet. The Jeffs, father and son, are misers of the most disgusting description. With millions, they live the life of pigs. They are dressed like peasants, are soaked in beer, and scented with the coarse tobacco of the country. Jeffs fils falls in love with Madelon at a ball given at Frauenbourg, at which she suddenly appears, in the company of an old reprobate, Gigoult, who is passed off as her parent. The Prince of Arimagne, whom Madelon has repulsed, sees an opportunity for revenge. Madelon falls ill, and at once all her friends desert her. She pawns her jewels, and is reduced to severe straits. At last her maid, Fredegonde, persuades her to accept the brute Jeffs.

The appearance of Jeffs in Paris, to marry the rich

orphan of the noble family of De Fleurus, is described with revolting elaboration. Madelon's old lovers have subscribed to give a *dinner* in her character of Mdlle. de Fleurus, of the Quartier St.-Germain, where she has taken apartments to carry out her fraud on the boorish country miser. She loathes him when he approaches her. He crawls from her splendour, to eat a two-franc dinner! On the wedding-day, the bride and her associates meet --to laugh at the bridegroom. They arrange to have a bachelor dinner in the house where the wedding-feast is given, and make the bride promise she will steal out and join the riot in her wedding-dress. She pretends to tear her flounce, and escapes to the bachelor party, where she finds the Prince of Armagne --drunk! Even the waiter at the wedding-breakfast casts sly glances at the bride, in memory of old times; and has reason to laugh at the bridegroom!

Madelon, at Frauenbourg, wife of the richest man in the town, revolutionizes the place. To the surprise of her old Paris favourites, she finds Jeffs bearable. She makes his château a regal residence, and gives great feasts in exquisite taste. Jeffs is whipped into an exquisite, and gets drunk on fine vintages instead of country beer. With the help of M. Champion and Madelon (who wheedles the prefect, while the deputy obtains the dismissal of a too honest secretary), Jeffs is enabled to obtain concessions from the Government, that make his fortune, and ruin his neighbours. The ruin of neighbours is distinctly foreseen; but it in no way affects the speculation of Messrs. Jeffs and Champion. They dig for

peat, and deliberately look forward to the time when their operations will do infinite harm to the Guernay family. When Madelon has, at last, run away with the Baron of Guernay, the inundation comes, while the Guernay family are holding high festival, and the enemies of Jeffs are effectually ruined. The calamities accumulate. M. About does not offer his readers catastrophes as *hauts primeurs*; he gives a feast of them. Charles Kiss is killed with one of the Guernay children in the inundations; Jeffs *père* dies in a madhouse, "like a lamp, for lack of spirits;" Baron Guernay's father-in-law opens a vein, in a bath! The Morgue has not slabs enough to hold the victims!

All fall or die, except Madelon, the destroyer,—and she!—we take leave of her when she is installed in the ancestral château of the ruined Prince of Armagne! We part from her with a feeling of relief, despising both herself and her victims; with the exception of the ladies of the Guernay family, who are quiet country gentlefolk.

So much for the story and the characters of this romance of triumphant vice. Some of the vice is elegant, and is sprinkled with sparks of wit, and happy turns of thought, and amusing audacities, and humorous forms of heartlessness. The style in which so many *vauriens* are presented to the public, is ambitious. M. About is continually striving to say or write good things, and he succeeds—occasionally. He is not in good temper with England; and appears to delight in making his rogue-in-chief (Jeffs) a brute, of British extraction. But M. About

is not strong when he is ill-tempered. He talks about a Lord Moon, a Lord Half-and-Half, and Lord Cockney Pufferly, " who alone owns one hundred and twenty square miles in Cockneyshire," and whose eldest son is Sir Archibald Snobboy ! M. About appears to believe that peers' eldest sons are baronets.

On ground where M. About is at home, and where his humour is not obscured by his ignorance, he is happier. When Jeffis is at the feet of Madelon, the author says of him, " he did not know he was kneeling at the most celebrated station on the road to Clichy." Again, " Country-people are made in this way : they have their hours when they admire virtue, and their centuries when they respect money." When Madelon asked the Baron of Guernay why he was not free, that they might fly together to the end of the world, M. About remarks—" If all the couples who sincerely sing the duett from ' The Favourite,' were to pay an author's fee of a sou, the largest income in Europe, would be that of Alphonse Royer." M. Champion " dropped a tear into his voice as easily as he poured *rhum* into his coffee." M. Gérard describes how he is very early wearied with the gaieties of the world. The young spark says to his uncle, " I have wiped out with my lips miles upon miles of vegetable rouge, and I have swallowed enough rice-powder to re-victual a garrison ; and if all the false hair I have caressed were stretched end to end, it would reach round the world." Here is a humorous reflection :—" There is a little of everything in human nature, as there is in

a *mayonnaise* of lobster." The *avarice* of Jeffs is described:—" It had been proved that Jeffs, after having kindled his fire, stuck a cork in the end of the bellows, to save the little wind that was left in them." The following is in M. About's "best manner":—" When Paris takes it into her head to raise a statue, she can never find a block of marble big enough for her purpose; but when it is her pleasure to destroy it, she can never break it into pieces that are small enough."

The parts of the work devoted to the discussion of social problems and plausible speculations, are dull, out of place, and not new. But M. About could not write two volumes without putting some good passages in them.

The sale of Madelon's effects, previous to her marriage with Jeffs, is described with a little wholesome bitterness:—

" In those days, mothers of families and young girls well brought up were absurdly ignorant, to a degree that I scarcely dare to avow. They might be laughed at by the learned generation which has taken their place. True it is, however, that as yet good and virtuous women had never penetrated into the boudoirs and dressing-rooms of these ladies *à la mode*. They knew vaguely, by the absence of their husbands, the debts of their sons, or the duels of their brothers, that, beyond the world in which they lived there existed another world, dangerous and unwholesome; but no one ever thought of lifting the veil which covered it: the entrenchments of the enemy were observed discreetly from afar. The sofas

and easy-chairs of Madelon were innocent of all virtuous contact ; no modest woman had inquired into the mysteries of her toilette ; the haughty nostril of a patrician lady had never inhaled her bottles of English essence or *eau de senteur*. Great progress was made in three days, thanks to Astolphe, and the sale tended considerably to familiarize the uninitiated with certain details. The splendour of Madelon's abode was long a subject of conversation in many good families. The poor of the neighbourhood also did not forget to make their remarks. The door was open to all comers ; and the edifying spectacle of an ill-acquired fortune brought about many a result which Astolphe had not foreseen. Thus, the pretty little milliner opposite, after looking at herself some time, at full length, in a Venetian mirror, began to think that a young person must be excessively foolish who should limit her ambition to the manufacturing of bonnets at fourteen francs each. Of course, the staff of gallantry was found gathered together, as if by the word of command, under the tent of Madelon. Nana, Marco, Lucie, Joliette, and twenty other celebrities hastened thither, strong in attraction, and, for the first time in their amiable lives, found themselves elbowing a multitude of honest women, who, with or without their husbands, were there indulging their eager curiosity. From this unforeseen shock resulted a variety of feelings which it would seem impossible to produce between persons whose lives were so utterly distinct and divided. Until then Paris had resembled a large chess-board—honest women moving on the

white squares, the Madelons on the black, both sides being separate; but the sale of the furniture confused the game, and mixed the adversaries up together. The famous Nana, drawing herself up respectfully in the way of the Baronne x., that lady declared that the young person possessed remarkable beauty. This was repeated by some one to Nana, who from this moment had nothing but good to say of the Baronne. Joliette, on the contrary, tossed her head with an air of great contempt at the Countess de —, whom she accused of having robbed her of a lover. She was not sorry to have a nearer view of this kind of *soi-disant* great lady. The Princess R—— thought Lucie Rabatjoie so divine in her pretty pink bonnet, that she sent to ask her, through a mutual friend, the address of her milliner. Two days afterwards Lucie sent the Princess a bonnet the exact counterpart of her own; and the lady, who was French, but from the north, accepted the present! It was on this occasion also that Madame x., the wife of the rich banker, decided to employ the hairdresser of Marco. This artist went every morning to the two ladies, each one asking news of the other. On meeting afterwards at the theatre, they examined each other through their glasses with gracious and elegant curiosity. Madame x. was perfectly *au courant* with all Marco's affairs, and always knew who the happy mortal was who assisted at her toilette. On her side, Marco defended the reputation of Madame x. at more than one bachelor supper. Thus it was that Astolphe brought about this fusion of the two worlds, which has made such

progress since 1841. He levelled the Pyrenees which separated vice from virtue.

It would be well if honest mothers of families and their daughters were as ignorant now as they appear to have been before Madelon's time of "creatures à la mode." It would be well, moreover, if M. About, who can write good things, and has wit and pathos at his command, would not attempt to make Madelons subjects for circulating libraries, nor to impress his readers with the belief that in his own country some of the men are fools, but that by far the greater proportion of them are rogues, full of epigrams and *savoir-vivre*. It is nine years since I lit upon M. About's "Tolla," and I cannot say that "Madelon" is an improvement on his Roman romance. "Madelon" is a tedious as well as a harmful book.

What songs can we expect to hear in the people's concert-rooms and on the people's own lips? Manners descend. I find it difficult to select words that will convey to the reader a just idea of the moral sentiments and the appalling coarseness with which "Popular Songsters" are charged. Even at the open-air concerts at the Champs Elysées, held in the summer, where the attendance is never below the shopkeeping class, the songs that are sung by the comic vocalists are such as would not be tolerated in any music-hall in London. France is particularly rich in popular songs, as every reader will agree who has examined the well-known illustrated edition of "Chants et Chansons Populaires de la France." In a great many of these the muse is not straitened by Puritanic stays. The songs of more recent date

which have lingered lovingly on the lips of the people—those of Dupont and others of his class have not been coarser than those which make part of the acknowledged national collection. The patriotic songs, and the drinking songs, and the military songs, may be numbered by the score, from those which celebrate the hero of the Place Vendôme and the cap of Père Biègeaud, to that which glorifies the four-sous' wine. It is when the lyre is tuned to comic measures that she is repulsively coarse. The comic songs of the people must be heard; in an English page they cannot be described.

I have said that there is abundant good reading within reach of the poorer classes; but this is not the reading which they are trained to enjoy. They have fine free libraries, like that by the Pantheon. But the great mass of readers of the working class see little more than their cheap newspaper, and some one or two of the mass of halfpenny journals which are sold in the streets of Paris. The working classes of Paris have for a very long time been accustomed to get their news daily. The *Siecle* is to be had at every wine-shop, and now they have the *Petit Journal*, price one sou, which they can buy every evening. This little newspaper is not allowed to issue any political intelligence; but it publishes all the social news, together with literary contributions from Lamartine and others. Its opening article, signed "Timothée Trimm," is a lively essay on some passing event. Taken altogether, the "Little Journal" is good reading for its 120,000 subscribers. The halfpenny literary journals, however, are the main

intellectual food of the people. Most of these journals resemble in form, the London journals. Their contents consist chiefly of highly-seasoned romances, the plots of which turn on various crimes and vices. They have, with hardly an exception, a woodcut under the title, that illustrates one of the stories. In the Passage Jouffroy there is a very large stall devoted to the sale of these publications. A glance at these illustrations for one week, as they lie along the newsvendor's board, will give the reader a slight idea of the average contents of the French people's cheap journals. The *Ruche Parisienne* has a drawing of a lady who is leaping from a carriage, into the arms of a gentleman. The picture is suggestive, inasmuch as the gentleman holds a revolver in his hand; while in the distance are two ruffians, each holding a gown. Next to this journal lies, *Les Veillées Parisiennes*. The illustration here, is to a romance entitled "The Mysteries of the Demi-Monde." A lady stands in a tragic attitude, with a pistol in each hand, one of which is levelled at the head of a negro footman. The lady is surrounded with all the elegancies of Parisian life; and she is resenting the audacious admiration of the negro. The next door neighbour to the *Ruche*, is the *Siecle Illustré*. The picture is still one of crime. A rag-picker from a gloomy corner, is watching the retreating figure of a villain, and promising himself the pleasure of giving him up to justice. The *Journal du Jeudi*, which lies next in the rank, gives its readers a fair illustration to one of Dumas' romances. The *Passe Temps* has a quiet illustration, but includes one

where a man is attentively examining the point of a sword. We now approach the *Journal pour Tous*. It is perhaps the most important of all these popular periodicals, and, I am happy to say, appears to be the best conducted of them. Its contents include a translation from Dickens, a description of a paper manufactory, and other useful reading. It includes also a romance by Xavier de Montepin, in which there is a grossly ignorant English caricature. Next in the rank lies a periodical called *Les Bons Romans*. The drawings suggest strong interest in the stories. In one, a soldier, with a torch in one hand and a pistol in the other, is advancing towards a pagoda. He heads a chapter entitled "The Nest of Murderers." In this same number there is a second illustration which pictorially describes an exceedingly rough group of smokers; one of whom is observing to his companions that he thinks they are coiners. *Roger Bon-temps* comes next; and with a startling illustration to a tale equally startling. The picture describes a group of great folk of the olden time, in gala dress. It is a Bridal; and in the centre of the happy crowd appears a gigantic jumping skeleton. We turn from the skeleton to the strangest picture of all, which decorates the front page of *L'Omnibus*. It is an illustration to a romance by Pierre Zaccone, entitled "Les Misérables de Londres." The artist pretends to give the French public a true idea of an execution in London. An old-fashioned gibbet, simply a beam standing out from the prison wall! From it the figure of a man dangling in the air by a short rope! His feet almost touch the plat

form, and are above the platform; so that it is not easy to conceive how the executioner, who is leaning against the upright beam of the gibbet, and is smirking at the crowd, contrived to perform his duty. Behind is a prison door, with a festoon of chains over it. Round about is a fighting crowd of blackguards, all in broken, brimless hats. It would not be easy to draw a group of modern figures less like English people of any class, than these; nor could the most imaginative artist easily conceive a scene, purporting to represent a London execution, less like it than that presented to the readers of *L'Omnibus*. The ignorance displayed in the drawing is mild and harmless, however, when compared with that of M. Zaccone. I will do this writer for the million the justice of observing, that his pictures of London and Londoners are not more extravagantly false than those of the majority of his fellow-writers in the halfpenny journals. Even in the *Journal pour Tous* the errors regarding us are inexcusable. When the reader reflects that it is from these journals the masses of the present French generation derive their knowledge of foreign institutions and manners, I think he will agree with me that the ignorant mistakes committed against us by popular French writers, and always to our prejudice, are to be deeply lamented. So thorough is their misconception of our national spirit; so complete is their ignorance of our laws and social customs, and so ridiculous are their ideas about our houses and streets and cities; and so evenly spread over the mass are all kinds of prejudices unfavourable to us, that were these French

writers about England banded into a society for the general diffusion of ignorance, they could not improve upon their present method of distributing darkness, and sowing harmful errors in it. Let me afford the reader a specimen of their ideas about England of the present time, which M. Zacccone gives to the thousands of readers of *L'Omnibus*. It will be seen that this teacher sets to work with the air of an authority. In a romance, which he takes care to inform his readers has never before been published, and the translation of which is prohibited, he pretends to paint the haunts, the habits, and the lives of the bad world of London.

The story opens in June 1842, in Paris. We are at once in the presence of a duchess--the Duchess of Frileuse. The author has not written many lines before he has hit number one at the English. A quantity of newspapers lie near the duchess. They are English papers, and they are described as the "gigantic products of British typography, which show more of the pride than of the intellectual strength, of the English." The duchess is one of those autocrats with a mystery, in whose society the *concierges* and other humble readers of France, delight. She suddenly throws down a newspaper, screams, pulls the bell violently, and commands a valet to order post-horses to start within two hours for Calais. The valet is, moreover, bidden to go instantly, that he may arrive time enough before his mistress, to order a special boat to cross to Dover. Of course money is no object with the duchess. She throws a thousand pounds' worth of

bank notes at the valet, and bids him begone on his errand. The next day the duchess was in London. She at once took a cab, and drove to a place which the author describes as one of the principal prisons of London. A man was to be hanged on the morrow, and the duchess must see him before his execution. She addresses herself to the prison doorkeeper. He informs her that it is not in his power to accord her an interview with the condemned John Blick. One person, and one only, has the right to grant her this favour. That person is the Attorney-General, who, according to the door-keeper of Newgate or Horsemonger-Lane Gaol, as the case may be, lives within five minutes' walk. The duchess at once repairs to this legal functionary, but, writes the author, "the Attorney was inflexible;" and John Blick was to be executed on the morrow morning! He alone could tell the duchess where her lost child was. Was he to carry the secret to the grave with him? Having put the duchess in this strong position in a London hotel, enter a little shabby man in black with a white neckcloth. He announces himself as Mr. Lorry. He is a physician without practice, and earns a little money by making himself useful to foreigners in London. He informs the duchess that he had followed her to the prison, and afterwards to the house of the Attorney-General. He knew that she had been unsuccessful in her applications to see John Blick. But he could help her to speak to the malefactor, if five minutes' conversation would be enough. The duchess, having only one or two questions to ask, declares herself

satisfied with Dr. Lorry's proposition, and accompanies him forthwith to the residence of the executioner of London. On the way the doctor discovers his plan. The executioner will cut down John Blick five minutes before the appointed time, and carry the body off to his own house, where, with a subtle cordial, the doctor undertakes to restore the murderer to life for a quarter of an hour, in the presence of the duchess. The duchess can hardly believe in the success of this enterprise; and when the reader is informed that the lady is described as being most familiar with London and with Londoners, he will not be astonished at her incredulity. However, Dr. Lorry vanquishes her hesitation, and assures her that success is only a matter of money. The hangman will want a substantial bribe. The duchess is ready to give her fortune, but Dr. Lorry believes that the hangman will be content with something less than that—the duchess's income being four thousand a year. The duchess enters the house of the hangman, and remains half an hour with him, when she reappears, and Dr. Lorry asks her whether she has succeeded. The duchess replies that the hangman has consented, whereupon Dr. Lorry remarks, "Truly, he is the most honest man in the three kingdoms; I know more than one, in the Strand, who would not have done so meritorious an action." The duchess returns to rest, at her hotel. On the morrow, while crowds surrounded John Blick's place of execution, the duchess repaired to the hangman's house, at the door of which she met Dr. Lorry, who gave her a bottle of the wonderful

mixture that was to restore the hanged man to life. The position of a London hangman is, according to the writer, one of dignity and affluence. A valet opened the door to the duchess and Dr. Lorry, and conducted them to a gloomy apartment with a vaulted roof, lighted by windows ten feet from the ground. In the centre of the room was a massive granite table, with benches covered with leather, ranged round it. The walls were bare, save at the end of the apartment, where a crucifix was suspended. The duchess knelt before the crucifix, and prayed. Presently the approach of a vehicle is heard, and then the heavy steps of men sound outside the door. In another minute two valets appear bearing the body of John Blick, which they deposit upon the granite table. The hangman follows, observing everything, with the proper attention of the master of the house. Then he turned to the duchess and said, "My lady, I have faithfully fulfilled our agreement. The hanged man still breathes. Lose no time, for I don't think he will last long."

He then bowed and left the room. Lorry rushed to the door after him, and bolted it from within. He then applied the cordial to the inanimate John Blick. A strong description of the man's bloated face follows. The duchess urges Dr. Lorry to be quick with his wonderful cordial. "Fear nothing, milady," replies the doctor; "Lorry knows his business better than all the titled charlatans who practise in the Strand and Piccadilly."

In short, John Blick is restored, not only to consciousness, but to a state of most useful activity.

He recognises the pretended physician as his old pal, Dic-Mur. The duchess, who is locked in the room with the two men, becomes alarmed when she sees them exchanging familiar nods. Blick asks Lorry who is this woman. At length he recognises the duchess. She at once implores the malefactor, whom she familiarly calls John, to give her the revelations she requires about her son. But Blick declines, saying, that while he holds the secret he will always be rich, whereas if he gave it to her, he would no longer hold any command over her. With this handsome reply he orders Dr. Lorry, who is now Dic-Mur, to garotte her ladyship, which order is promptly executed, and the two villains escape, "in the twinkling of an eye," through the high windows. When the hangman returns to the apartment, he finds the unfortunate duchess stretched at length on the ground. His first impulse is to make known the escape of Blick to the "Attorney;" the "Attorney" being M. Zaccoone's way of describing the Attorney-General. But the cunning hangman reflects in time, that by reporting this escape he will incriminate himself, and so, on the morrow of his execution, John Blick is able to resume his criminal career in London, without fear of being disturbed by the police.

A history of manners in London, carried out on this model, is in course of publication for the improvement of the readers of *L'Omnibus*. The specimen I have described, without the least exaggeration, is not more extravagantly false than many other stories with English foundations, to be found scattered

through the cheap periodical literature of France. None of these sou papers can bear comparison with the penny literary journals of England. There are one or two that are thoroughly moral and instructive, and appeal to decent families. But the mass consist of romances a trifle milder and more highly-seasoned than those which unhappily divert French readers of the middle class.

Against editors of cheap journals of the above description, I would back a humble writer like M. Jaeglé as being the more useful citizen. Some years ago this modest instructor of the people, formed the idea of writing and issuing the codes affecting the various classes and conditions of the population. He gave a light and pleasant, and even a fanciful, turn to the little sou treatises which he published one after the other, and which he made amusing as well as instructive. He issued, in this way, the code for *concierges*, the code for married people, the code for workmen, the code for the domestic servant, the code of prudence—ay, and the code of the dead ! The code of the working man, for example, is a clear and amusingly written little treatise on the laws which affect working men. The domestic servants' code, in the same way, instructs them on their legal status in society. One of these little books has more real instruction in it, than any twenty numbers of the journals I have described.

The conclusion which every examiner of the literature of the French working classes and the French poor must reach is, that it cannot bear comparison with the popular literature of Eng-

land, or with that of Germany. I mean that it is alarmingly defective in moral teaching and in accurate knowledge. It shows no want of that *esprit* of which the French are so proud. It is full of strength—of a horrible description. When the writer has a murder in hand, he puts the knife plainly under the reader's nose, and the drops of blood stand out with a diamond point of light upon each. The criminal of the romance is a lithe and muscular rascal. When rags are to be painted, they are daubed into the scene with a cunning strength. But all this sinew and art are, I repeat, in no very honourable service. No serious man who has lived much in the world, and has seen the effect fiction has on the half-educated and uneducated especially; can glance through such papers as those which abound on the stalls of Paris, and are bought up by the working classes, without protesting that they have the seeds of evil in them.

On looking over a Paris book-stall, or on examining the contents of a Paris bookseller's shop window, an Englishman will remark that all, or nearly all, the books are merely in the frailest paper covers. Purchasers who wish to keep any of them, must have them bound. They are unfit for libraries, in the state in which they are sold. • When they have passed through the hands of one or two readers, they are merely wrecks of books. I am certain that the question of cheap, strong binding is important in the diffusion of sound literature. We have acknowledged the use of indestructible primers for children; why, then, should not strong books be made for hands that

have not yet learned to read a volume daintily ? A book bought by a working man with the intention of keeping it carefully like the rest of his property, if it be in a paper cover, like these French books of all descriptions, will fade, leaf by leaf, out of his possession. More respect is paid to a bound book than to an unbound one. Directly one leaf has parted company from the rest, a book is doomed. I have seen the most perplexing heap of tangled paper and pack-thread pointed out as representing the literary possessions of a well-to-do family. Shakspere in such a condition would hardly be readable. If books fall into this state in the hands of ladies, they cannot possibly long enjoy any kind of existence in the rougher keeping of working men. The binding of even our three-volume novels, astonish French readers. They exclaim that it is magnificent--this rough cloth covering ! Not being accustomed to handle bound books, the roughest English volume is a luxury to them. The unsightly condition into which French books fall, after a little use, has much to do with the deplorable fact I have already noticed, namely, that it is rare to see even the shadow of what Englishmen call a library, in a French home. I am sure I do not exaggerate when I say that in the homes of the skilled mechanics of England, there are, as a rule, three books, and three good books to boot, in sound condition, for every ragged volume to be found among a Frenchman's household gods. If some enterprising publishing firm, like that of Messrs. Hachette, would issue a cheap bound library of the best French authors, they would tempt thousands, who now never

keep a book, to make the foundation of a library; nor would the State do wrong in encouraging in every way, such an enterprise. Channing said (and he is one of the few English writers occasionally quoted in France) that a shelf of books in a poor man's home was a pledge of his keeping the peace. It is not the book that is read and cast aside which promotes the spread of knowledge. •The book that becomes the teacher, that sinks into the mind, and influences it strongly for good or for evil, and that provokes a thirst for wider and deeper knowledge; that fertilizes the mind and braces it; that makes out of the mere labouring brute and lout the thoughtful and the god-like man--is the book that lies, year after year, clean and neat almost as when it came from the publisher's hands, upon the shelf of the humble student. For such use and duration all books should be carefully adapted.

### CHAPTER III.

The End of the Poor—Funeral Pomp Performers—The Common Grave—Mont Parnasse—Organization in a Cemetery—Richefeu's—Retrospect and Conclusion.

THE system on which funerals are conducted in Paris, is admirable for its cheapness and its completeness. A rapid despatch of business is, indeed, indispensable; since the hours are few that pass between the moment of death, and that of burial. The administration of Funeral Pomp— a private company that contracts with the municipal authorities for the monopoly of all interments within the 20 arrondissements of the capital—is responsible for the due performance of the most solemn funeral state and ceremony at the shortest notice, as for the decent conduct of the pauper's five-franc funeral "without accessories." The conduct of the Funeral Pomp of Paris is a privilege—a monopoly that is put up to competition, on the most strictly-regulated terms. The contractor is bound to a printed list of charges, which he cannot exceed on any pretence whatever. Every item is in the price list of Funeral Pomp, down to the poor working man's mortuary cloth. The contractor is compelled, by his agreement with the municipal authorities, to keep five or six thousand coffins ready made, and distributed

over the 20 arrondissements, at appointed depots. These coffins are at fixed prices. The contractor has no opportunity of running up a bill. They who choose to make their dead relatives "splendid in ashes" are as carefully protected against imposition, as the poor widow who desires to convey the remains of her lost partner to the common grave, with the cheapest decency. An adult's coffin is to be had for 7 francs; and decent interment is gratuitously afforded to the indigent, the municipality paying the Funeral Pomps Company 5 francs for every gratuitous funeral. According to M. Maurice Block, the municipality pay for these five-franc funerals, to the amount of 200,000 francs annually. By the contract passed between the municipality and the Funeral Pomps Company, the rich, who can afford to have grand mass, and to spend between £30 and £40 on the passage of dead greatness, or dead Plutus, from the mortuary house to the grave; are compelled to give something towards the funeral "without accessories." A toll is levied on the dead according to the means of the living, and the rich are taxed for the poor. Yet it has been written again and again, the French have no poor laws! I grant they have none which rap at a poor man's door and command him to give to the hungry, while they leave the knocker of the rich untouched. They tax according to a man's means of paying. He who can afford a polished oak coffin for his departed friend, can spare some extra francs, that shall go towards the deal boards which are to fold the mortal remains of him who is dying upon straw, in the next street.

Funeral "pomp" is divided into nine categories, the tenth being the pauper's funeral without any accessories whatever. As I have already incidentally observed in a previous chapter, these form by far the greater proportion of Paris funerals. A hearse (a black covered truck), without accessories, driven by a coachman in rusty black, who wears an extravagantly large cocked hat, followed by a straggling crowd of relatives and friends! There is a business-like air about the officials of these processions that go quickly through the streets—without accessories; but they are solemnities in comparison with English pauper funerals. No *curé* walks before (for a *curé* costs 16 francs), but there is no shamefaced poverty, no shocking irreverence in the humble *cortège*. When an English pauper funeral is performing, the coarse and irreverent manner of it at once suggests the familiar lines:—

“ Rattle his bones over the stones,  
He's only a pauper, whom nobody owns.”

I have followed many of these humble funerals of the poor of Paris to the common grave—this common grave which the shabby-genteel dread more than hunger or other suffering. Perhaps the cemetery where the filling of the common grave may be seen to the greatest advantage, is that of Mont Parnasse, on the boulevard, and near the old barrier of that name. The visitor is always warned of his approach to a Paris cemetery, by the establishments of the sculptors of monumental marble and stone, and by the vendors of *immortelles*, whose sheds and yards line the way. Close by Mont Parnasse are stately

recording stones, and near them stacks of the black wooden crosses destined to figure in serried ranks over the common grave. Some of these establishments, which do a marvellous business on the Fête des Morts, on the 1st November, have peculiar and sombre signs. Thus one that is almost opposite the entrance of the cemetery, is inscribed "Au tombeau du Général Foy." It is cold weather enough, but the women are sitting outside a white and black house wreathing *immortelles*. All their business is with Death. Their establishment includes, as the passer-by is informed by means of a great sign-board, a provisional tomb for the reception of bodies. The trade appears to be a brisk and profitable one, and the sawing of tombstones is perpetual. All the day long funerals are passing; and the great majority of them travel along the silent highway of death "without accessories" to climb the steep ground of the cemetery, to that broad, open ditch on the brow of the hill, which is the common grave of the poor. About an acre of this grave is covered in and thickly studded with black crosses, planted near the resting place of the dead, whose memory they are intended to honour. Every person who has spent half-an-hour of a busy morning at the mouth of a common grave, will agree that it would be almost impossible for the grave-diggers to plant the crosses exactly over the coffins, the position of which they are intended by sorrowing relatives to mark. The rapidity with which the grave is filled is at first very startling to the sensitive mind. As the funerals come to the edge of the broad ditch in rapid succession, the coffins are

gently slipped down the steep banks, and are arranged at the bottom by the grave-digger, who adjusts them with a keen eye to the economy of space.' From above the ditch is continually filled in, so that the earth just covers the last comer. Round about are groups of men of the Funeral Pomp, in their dingy grey, with their craped glazed hats, chattering with the cemetery guardians in their light-blue livery; while the empty hearses stand at rest for a short time, in picturesque confusion, before starting back to town for a new load of mortality. At hand is a somewhat capacious sentry-box, which is the officiating priest's retiring-room, where he sits winter and summer, ready apparelled to perform the last offices over the dead poor, who late and early come rumbling up the hill "without accessories."

I remember that when the present Emperor first attained power, some effort was made to abolish this common grave, and to give a separate resting-place even to every pauper. But the plan, it would appear, was found impracticable, since it was not adopted. I conclude that a system of separate graves was found impossible, because I know that there has always been a strong feeling among the people against the *Fosse Commune*. There is, in truth, something very repugnant to every sensitive nature in this packing or stowing away of the dead in a long open ditch. The observer can satisfy himself at a glance that a great deal of space is saved, and he will not fail to see also, the bitter price of the economy. The packing and the hurrying, and in a short time the positive uncertainty as to where the

remains of the dead husband or the dead child lie, give new poignancy to the grief of the bereaved, and take from the solemnity of the grave. Little streets are arranged where the common grave has been filled up; and the mourning poor come to fill up the space with the black crosses and little wooden railings, at any rate near the spot where the ashes of the loved one lie. Some come with flowers, some with *immortelles*; and mothers bring the toys of their dead children and deposit them under glass over the little graves, while the rich are in the stately avenues hard by, shut in their private chapels.

The French talent for organization shines about the grave, as in the busiest haunts of men. These monument builders and carpenters of black crosses, and weavers of funeral wreaths, belong to well-considered organizations. They contract for grave flowers, and tout at the doors of the Mairies, where deaths are registered. Their trade is adapted to the convenience of the poorest, and they are apt makers of profits—even out of the common grave. There are tariffs for flowers, and the mourner who does his own gardening over the grave of his beloved, will find that the regular charge for a can of water is one sou. Then, hard by, is there not Richefeu's; where the funeral meats are ever ready, and where there is generous wine to console the mourner? From the great grave upon the hill, groups of friends who have followed some companion or acquaintance to his last rest, are to be seen strolling to the wine and bread and cheese that are usually part of a funeral ceremony.

In the old time the dead were buried in Paris, and in the heart of Paris. The Marché des Innocents, for instance, was formerly a cemetery. But Intramural burials have long since been abolished, and now the dead of Paris are carried to the three great cemeteries of Père-la-Chaise, Montmartre, and Mont Parnasse. There are, moreover, ten small cemeteries in the outskirts, like those of Passy, Auteuil, etc. The Company of Funeral Pomps is bound to give up a certain percentage of their gross receipts. Half of the sum is given to the parish of the deceased, the other half being reserved as a common fund, one-fifth of which is handed over to the Archbishop of Paris, who is bound to distribute it, in concert with the Prefect of the Seine, among the most necessitous parishes. Here, then, is another tax in favour of the poor—a tax that realizes between £5000 and £6000 per annum. I find by the last calculations, made for a period of ten years, that the numbers buried in the three great Paris cemeteries were placed thus:—1595 in perpetual graves, 4670 in temporary graves, and 22,024 in the common general grave. The average numbers of funerals of the various classes for the same period were:—27 funerals of the first class, 83 of the second, 270 of the third, 441 of the fourth, 1100 of the fifth, 2865 of the sixth, 2351 of the seventh, 51 of the eighth, 298 of the ninth, and 14,778 “without accessories.” This calculation does not include funerals from the hospitals, asylums, or prisons.

And so I bring my inquiries into the condition of the Poor of Paris to a close. I have endeavoured in

these volumes to set before the reader, in a candid and impartial spirit, all I have been able to see, hear, and learn on this grave and most important subject. Leo Lesp s observed some time back, in a number of the *Figaro*, that "while the Government will allow only half a kilogramme of gunpowder to be sold at once to one person, the unlimited sale of ink is permitted." There is danger, and not a little sometimes, in the spilling of ink; and none can feel the deep responsibility of holding this subtle fluid at the end of a pen, more acutely than the writer who is called upon to describe the results of his experience of the hardly-tasked, and poorly-paid, thousands of a great city. The rash expression of opinion; a too credulous ear that accepts every statement, may spread abroad errors that will lead to evil; whereas the mission of the inquirer was to put forth the truth, that, however humble the voice which utters it, has life in it, and will endure and bring forth good fruit. I believe that throughout my laborious inquiry I have taken all the care it was possible to take with the view of coming to an impartial judgment. After having set before the reader a full account of the earnings of the Paris working classes, as stated by themselves, beginning with the highest skilled workman, and proceeding down to the old-clothesman and the maggot breeder, I made a study of the machinery of the Assistance Publique of Paris. This institution, or system of relief of the poor, I found so utterly unlike our English system of relief, that I did not hesitate to occupy considerable space in setting every branch of it before the English

reader. I should indeed be ungrateful were I to part from this subject without having borne my testimony to the readiness with which I have been assisted by all functionaries, whether high or low, connected with this department. The Minister of the Interior and the chiefs of the departments under him; the Prefect of the Seine, and his secretaries; the Director-General of Public Assistance, M. Armand Husson, and his chief secretary, M. de Cambray; have made my labours in their departments pleasant as well as comparatively easy; and, should my explanation of the system of poor relief in Paris tempt other inquirers to follow in my footsteps, I am sure that I can promise them beforehand, that they will be received and helped with that courtesy which has so long been one of the delightful parts of the French character.

I deemed that I should not have completely performed the task I had undertaken, if I had confined myself to an account of the machinery of the Paris Assistance Publique. I therefore proceeded to visit all the important public establishments that are under M. Husson and his subordinates. I gained in this way, opportunities of judging the Paris regulations for the relief of the poor, by their results. I have set before the reader, if not finished, at least truthful, sketches of the interiors of houses of help; of asylums for the aged and infirm, and of nurseries for abandoned children and the offspring of hospital inmates.

I discovered a strange contrast between the administrators of public charity in Paris, and the distri-

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butors of parochial charity in London. I found the former doing their spiriting most gently, and filled with the most laudable anxiety not to degrade to a chronic condition of pauperism, the poor whom they were called upon to help. They were strongly in favour of out-door relief, that left the person relieved in a position to help himself, and to recover his normal status in society. The truth that lies at the bottom of the striking difference which undoubtedly exists, between the poor relief of London and that of Paris, is that here relief is distributed by the kind hands of Christian gentlefolk. Here, nearly all ladies of good position are more or less engaged in the active distribution of charity; and in the giving of that precious and chastening relief, which flows from a kind tongue and from the work of gentle hands. While making these few concluding reflections, I light by accident upon fresh examples to illustrate the difference I see between London and Paris poor relief. I see a Bethnal-Green shoemaker too far weakened by consumption to continue his calling, attended in his poor home by his wife. Every hour's attention she gives to him is taken from her work of boot-closing; and the proceeds of this ill-paid toil are all the means left to the family. A little relief will keep the home together; but in Bethnal Green this is not to be had. The family suggest a plan that must have cost the dying workman many a pang. Will the parish take him into the house; leaving the wife in the little home with her child, to continue her work of boot-closing; by which, at any rate, two mouths can be filled

somelio? The workhouse authorities will have all in the union or none. I have only to turn the page of the same newspaper, to find that in another direction, London parish authorities are not less unkind. Starving workwomen apply to the Worship Street police magistrate for a trifle from the poor-box, because they have failed in their endeavours to get enough to eat, by making slop-shirts at the rate of eighteenpence per dozen. What is their report? Why, that the parish authorities will give them nought unless they go into the workhouse. Were they Paris workwomen, were the Bethnal-Green shoemaker a Paris shoemaker, out-door relief would be willingly given, together with comfort and advice as to the future. For here, public charity does not work by fitful impulses, but under well-regulated control; and it loses none of its fervour by its subjection to order.

Having thoroughly examined the system, and the working of the system, of the Assistance Publique, I directed my attention to the actual condition of the Paris working classes, and to the rival systems of great and little workshops. I quickly saw that the most hideous developments of reckless competition had told on the condition of the Paris labour market, as they had on the London market. I found the sweater and the slop-worker; and, almost everywhere, the more skilful, or rather, the acuter workmen, making profits by taking work at a vile price, and paying starvation wages to fellow-workmen for it. These small employers, who have little or no capital, and who can command work chiefly

It cheaper than it can be done elsewhere, are the details of the ~~and~~ workshop system. On my tour through France I found the great employers of labour, and had occasion to note what had been done by great firms like the Alexandres and the Barbediennes, for the improvement of the condition of their artisans. In some cases—indeed in most cases—the masters were the heads of mutual benefit societies, arranged on the ingenious Government principle—namely, of taking the savings of the working classes out of their own hands, and giving them into the custody of their employers. A few readers may remember that, during the strike of the London building operatives, a certain society, impudently called a Mutual Benefit Society, was exposed. The society to which I refer was the creation of a very eminent firm of railway contractors, who had drawn up rules and regulations under which they deducted a certain percentage from the wages of every man whom they employed. These deductions formed a sick fund. No man, however, could declare himself on the fund who was prostrated by rheumatism. No account of the money received or the money paid, was given, or was even held to be due from the employers to their men. Again, directly a man was discharged by the firm, he ceased to have any claim whatever upon it, even after he had been a forced weekly contributor to it for years. It was stated, during the effervescence consequent upon the London builders' strike, that the firm on whose works this compulsory benefit society existed, had gained some thousands of

pounds by it. I believe it was abolished after a severe struggle on the part of the men. It was frequently instanced by the advocates of the working builders' cause, as a most reprehensible exercise of authority ; and there can be no doubt in the mind of any impartial person that this irresponsible society, to which men were forced by their dependence on their employers to subscribe, was a gross outrage on their independence. This society, which could not bear the light of day in England, was, however, only too faithful a copy of the benefit societies that exist in the large manufactories of Paris. These manufactories, notwithstanding the tyranny which is exercised in them, are more advantageous to the working classes than the small workshops in which only four or five men are employed by masters, who are working men themselves. There are, indeed, a few great manufacturers who have dealt with their workmen in a liberal and enlightened spirit ; and in the front ranks of these it is but bare justice to place M.M. Alexandre and Sons, of Ivry, the renowned harmonium builders.

Having examined the condition of the Paris labour market, having seen how the unfortunate people who could find no work were relieved, and having visited the chief asylums of Paris, I deemed it my duty to touch upon the food of the poor of this capital. I found that cheap food, and very cheap food, was to be had in abundance ; I discovered sagacious purveyors of pennyworths who, without having the least pretension to be regarded as philanthropists, were carrying on a most flourishing trade in all kinds of

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food. The author of this article brings fortune to the poor, by giving sufficient sustenance to a child who would always be on the verge of starvation in London. If the people in London who are tempted by the success of the great caterers for the poor in Glasgow, facilitate the establishment of cheap kitchens for the poor, require some little additional encouragement to decide them to venture, let them visit Paris and examine the economy which presides over the preparation of food for the poor. There is no reason why this economy should not be introduced into London cookery, and why, since the materials are more abundant, and are on the whole cheaper in London; capitalists should not drive a good profit from model cook-shops for the necessitous. I see that an establishment for the supply of cheap cooked food has already been successfully started in the New Cut, under the title of the Surrey Cooking Dépôt. At this dépôt soups and other dishes at 1d. are sold, and with considerable profit. Its week's returns show an investment of £106, 11s. 9d. for food, which returned, even at the low prices at which it was re-sold, a gross gain of £145, 18s. 9d. The profit on this transaction, after deducting all expenses, was a fraction over £11. This dépôt has been in existence six months, and is now a flourishing concern, in the centre of one of the poorest districts of the British metropolis. Great quantities of wholesome broken food are every day wasted in London, that would be used in Paris. All this might be gathered together and retailed at an extraordinarily low figure, so that every man with a penny in his

pocket, might be able to get a healthy stomach-full. It is painful, unquestionably, to think that there are hundreds of people round about us, to whom the preparation of the broken food from our tables would be a boon ; but while there is hunger in our midst, no particle of food that might be turned into blood and bone, should be ignorantly cast aside. I state a terrible but an undeniable fact when I declare that enormous quantities of material that would give comfort to suffering human beings, are cast into the mash-tub, nay, upon the dust-heap.

I have been tempted by the curious materials placed in my hands to dwell on the secret societies of the French working classes. Had the space been at my command, I could have given the reader many more most interesting details I have been compelled to suppress. I might have described some more of those strange processions of working men's societies which occasionally astonish the Paris visitor — how the gardeners and the coachbuilders make common pilgrimage on the day of Saint Fiacre, and how the former carry trees and flowers triumphantly along with them. I chose to dwell rather on the prosaic part of these old institutions of the working classes, and to indicate the reasons and promises of the struggle on which they are engaged for existence. The accomplishment of this part of my task has not, I trust, been uninteresting or uninstructive to the great numbers of Englishmen who must watch with great attention all the existing self-governing institutions of the various working classes of Europe.

The literature of the poorer classes of Paris might

have occupied much more space than I was able to give it. There was a time when the literature of the poorer classes of France was much more interesting than it is at the present moment. The laws which are now in force prevent anything like a free expression of the wants and aspirations of the people. It cannot be said, indeed, that there are any papers which express the opinions of the working classes. There are, as I have shown, cheap literary journals which appeal to the tastes and passions of the mass, but there are none in which their own voice is heard.

And lastly, I gave my attention to the lodgings, to the homes, of the working population of Paris. Here, again, there were no means of coming directly at their opinions. I could gather only from the failure of the *cités ouvrières* that families who were miserably huddled in the inconvenient and unhealthy apartments, prefer this inconvenience and this insalubrity, with the independence that is the soul of home, to the most airy and commodious form of barracks.

In parting from this subject of the Poor of Paris, I am struck with the remembrance that at every turn I have found one impediment full in front of the reforms that might ease the condition of the Paris working population. There are some things which the English working classes may envy the great and intelligent working class of Paris. The Parisians may, indeed, one and all, be proud of the tenderness with which they treat poverty, in whatever guise it presents itself to them. There are bits

chivalry, the bases of some of the charitable institutions. Paris, the like of which we have not in England. The Bonnefamille of Honour—the society established to lend a hand to working men in their moments of difficulty, with their own good faith for sole security—can we catch this in our midst? Have we that tenderness, organized and carried out by municipal authority, which respects the case of the poor *humble*? We have only the workhouse for the helpless poor, and there arises the helpless grey-headed, kept up in the child's roof. I must be permitted to state, that all poverty does not bring with it the same shame that overwhelms it in London. This is my opinion after long experience. This is not the opportunity for inquiring whether that great Revolution, which is a daily boast in every Frenchman's mouth, brought all classes so closely together that it enabled the richest born to understand all the horrors of the condition of the poorest born. No man, however, who has had opportunities of studying all classes of French society, will, I am sure, contradict me when I say that the current of human sympathy runs with a freer flow from one class to that beneath it, in this country than it does on our side of the Channel. There is less of the manner of patronage in giving, and less of the shame of dependence in receiving, among our neighbours than among us; so that a man of the acutest sensibility may go through the twenty Paris bureaus of benevolence and watch the sisters tending the poor in the four or five Houses of Help which depend on each bureau, and he shall not

once be shocked by a word of ~~wishes~~ spoken to one of the Paris recipients of bread. There is however a reverse to the medal. The living population of Paris are the dependants of the dead. They must needs be surrounded with great institutions, for the Government will not let them to help themselves. The poor children which a starveling's crust can't satisfy. Liberty.

"THE END.













